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# COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

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# COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

VOLUME IX FALL 1957 NUMBER 4

## POETRY AND PAINTING: CHINESE AND WESTERN VIEWS OF THEIR CONVERTIBILITY

HANS H. FRANKEL

LOPE DE VEGA, in one of his sonnets, refers to two famous contemporaries in a striking way; he calls the Italian poet Marino "a great painter for the ears," and the Flemish painter Rubens "a great poet for the eyes":

> Dos cosas despertaron mis antojos,
> extrangeras, no al alma, a los sentidos:
> Marino, gran pintor de los oydos,
> y Rubens, gran poeta de los ojos.[1]

Six hundred years and 6,000 miles away, a similar concept occurs in a parallel situation. The Chinese poet Su Shih (Su Tung-p'o, 1036-1101), in one of his poems, praises two men, one a poet and the other a painter:

> Tu Fu's poems are figureless paintings,
> Han Kan's paintings are wordless poems.[2]

In both poems, a very special relationship is established between poetry and painting. They are considered parallel and comparable; more than that, they take each other's place. This concept has several interesting aspects, some of which will be examined in the following pages. A comparative treatment of the same phenomenon in two widely separated and obviously unrelated literatures may bring out significant similarities as well as differences.

One of the basic assumptions underlying the concept of the converti-

[1] *Rimas humanas y divinas*, facsimile reprint of Madrid 1634 ed. (Madrid, 1935), p. 56, verso. Angel Valbuena Prat, *Historia de la literatura española*, 3rd ed. (Barcelona, 1950), II, 300-301, takes these lines in a different, somewhat disparaging sense. But Lope's admiration for both Marino and Rubens is well attested.

[2] Chinese text and German translation in T'eng Ku, "Su Tung P'o als Kunstkritiker," *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, n.s., VIII (1932), 107.

bility of poetry and painting is their equality. This equality, however, took many centuries to develop in both Europe and China.

In the European Middle Ages, painting was generally held to be inferior to literature. This attitude is epitomized in the words of Pope Gregory the Great, who wrote in one of his letters: "Quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat pictura."[3] (What writing offers to the literate, painting offers to the ignorant.) This pronouncement is not surprising in an age when cultural activities were the exclusive prerogative of those few who could read and write. In the mediaeval churches of Europe there is ample evidence of the extent to which painting and other arts of design were employed for the religious instruction of the illiterate masses. Indeed, the fine arts were called "laicorum litteratura."[4]

During the Italian Renaissance painters and sculptors fought a long and bitter struggle to rid themselves of this low reputation. In numerous writings, they emphasized the mathematical and scientific basis of their work, to prove that they were intellectuals rather than craftsmen, and thus the equals of writers.[5] They proclaimed contemporary art as the true heir of classical antiquity, and never tired of citing classical authors such as Simonides of Ceos, who called painting "silent poetry," and poetry "speaking painting."[6] Another favorite standby was Horace's dictum, "Ut pictura poesis"[7] (Poetry is like painting)—with characteristic disregard for the context. In fact, not only Horace but most of the other ancient authorities whom the Italians blithely quoted in support of their thesis were actually speaking not of painting but of literature.[8] But that did not deter these stout champions of the fine arts. They took their ammunition wherever they found it, even from philology. The sculptor and poet Pomponius Gauricus pointed to the Greek word *graphein*, which means both "to write" and "to paint," as proof that these two arts are inseparable.[9] (He would have been pleased to know that in literary Chinese, too, a single verb, *hsieh*, is used in the dual sense of "to write" and "to paint," and that the expression *tu hua* "to look at a painting" literally means "to read a painting.")

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[3] *Epistolae*, IX, 9, quoted by Fritz Saxl, *Antike Götter in der Spätrenaissance* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1927), p. 10.

[4] See Leonardo Olschki, *Die romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters* (Wildpark-Potsdam, 1928), p. 17.

[5] See Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy, 1450-1600* (Oxford, 1940), pp. 48-54.

[6] Cited in Plutarch, *Moralia*, 346 f. The precise meaning of Simonides' statement cannot be inferred from this isolated quotation, without any context.

[7] *Ars poetica*, line 361.

[8] See Rensselaer W. Lee, "*Ut pictura poesis*: The Humanistic Theory of Painting," *Art Bulletin*, XXII (1940), 197-269. This article also contains a full list of pertinent passages from classical literature.

[9] *De sculptura* (1504), cited in Jean Paul and Irma A. Richter, *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, 2nd ed. (London, 1939), I, 48-49.

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In Italy, the struggle to win equality for painters and sculptors developed into a grand debate on the relative merits of the fine arts on the one hand and literature on the other. A vigorous champion of painting was Leonardo da Vinci. In the first part of his *Treatise on Painting* he demonstrates in detail the superiority of painting over poetry. To him, the eye is "the most noble sense," while the ear is "the less noble one."[10] "Painting," he asserts, "represents the forms of nature's works with more truth than does the poet."[11] Nevertheless he also suggests their convertibility, as when he states: "Painting is a poetry that is seen and not heard, and poetry is a painting which is heard and not seen."[12]

On the opposite side, there were men like Mario Equicola, who wrote: "However worthy of praise painting, modelling and sculpture may be, nevertheless they must be considered far inferior to poetry in dignity and authority. Painting is a work and labour more of the body than of the mind, and is, more often than not, exercised by the ignorant."[13]

Thus the battle raged. But by the end of the sixteenth century the equality of painting had been fairly well established in Western Europe. The ancient prejudice lingered on, however, for instance in the form of oppressive taxes leveled on painters in Spain through most of the seventeenth century.[14] But so little memory remained of the ancient rivalry in seventeenth-century Spain that Fray Hortensio Félix de Paravicino (1580-1633), who called himself "grande apasionado de los pintores,"[15] could say in one of his sermons: "Nunca los pinceles riñeron con las plumas."[16]

In China, the gradual rise of painting to a level of full equality with literature runs parallel to the European development in some respects, but there are also important differences. For many centuries, the art of painting occupied a somewhat ambiguous position in Chinese civilization. On the one hand, the educated classes of mediaeval China, like their European counterparts, tended to look down on painters as unlettered artisans. The bulk of mediaeval painting in China—as in Europe—was done by skilled craftsmen who remained nameless and of whom therefore little is known. Some of their work, dating approxi-

[10] Translation by A. Philip McMahon, *Treatise on Painting*, by Leonardo da Vinci (Princeton, 1956), I, 17.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[13] Translation by Blunt (see note 5), p. 52, from *Instituzioni . . . con un eruditissimo discorso della pittura* (Milan, 1541).

[14] See Ernst Robert Curtius, "Calderón und die Malerei," *RF*, L (1936), 109-110.

[15] Cited by Emilio Alarcos, "Los sermones de Paravicino," *RFE*, XXIV (1937), 291, note 1.

[16] Cited by M. Herrero García, *Estimaciones literarias del siglo XVII* (Madrid, 1930), p. 233.

mately from the fifth to the eleventh century, has come to light in this century in the wall paintings and silk scrolls of Tun-huang.

On the other hand, painting was taken up occasionally by educated men as an avocation. Beginning about the second century of our era, and increasing in volume in the following centuries, we have records of individuals who were recognized and esteemed by the literati and by the court as great painters. But few of them were known as painters exclusively. Most of them were also accomplished in literature and scholarship, and some held high official posts. Even members of the best families took an interest in painting, either as connoisseurs and collectors or by practicing the art themselves. For example, Hsiao I, an imperial prince of the Liang dynasty, took up painting as an adjunct to his numerous literary and scholarly activities. (He later occupied the throne for a brief period, 552-555, and is known by the posthumous name Yüan-ti.)

As late as the T'ang dynasty (618-907), the ambiguity in the position of painting had not yet been resolved. That it was considered a respectable avocation is clear from the fact that it was practiced by several T'ang emperors and members of their families.[17] Indeed, one of the most illustrious painters of that dynasty, Li Ssu-hsün (651-716), was related to the imperial house, and his nephew Li Lin-fu (died 752), who held the reins of government for many years, was also a painter. The high esteem in which T'ang painters were held by their contemporaries is evident in many of the poems of Tu Fu (712-770).[18] But from the point of view of the court historiographers, those who were known *only* as painters, not as writers or high officials, were not deemed worthy of being included in the official histories among the great men of the dynasty. Such is the case of Wa Tao-tzu (Wu Tao-hsüan), one of the most celebrated of all T'ang painters, who was employed and highly honored at the court of Emperor Hsüan-tsung (reigned 712-756). Generally, painters who do have biographies in the histories of the mediaeval dynasties are recorded there as officials or as literati, and their artistic achievements are treated only incidentally.

The traditional contempt of painting as a mere craft is evident in the official histories of the T'ang dynasty. In the biography of the famous court painter Yen Li-pen (died 673) we read:

> Once, when Emperor T'ai-tsung was taking a boat ride on the Ch'un-yüan Lake with a reinue of courtiers and scholars, there was a rare bird [or birds?] comfortably riding the waves. T'ai-tsung greatly appreciated it. He ordered those who were in attendance to write poems about it, and summoned Li-pen with the

[17] T'ang emperors and princes who painted are listed by Chang Yen-yüan in his *Li-tai ming-hua chi* (ed. in *Chin-tai pi-shu*, 7th ser.), 9. la-b.

[18] See for instance the famous poem in which he pays tribute to the painter Ts'ao Pa, translated by William Hung, *Tu Fu, China's Greatest Poet* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), pp. 211-212.

command to paint it. Then the cry was passed on outside the pavilion: "Master painter Yen Li-pen!"[19] [And yet] he already held at that time the post of Chief Secretary of the Bureau of Titles of Nobility. He came running, perspiring heavily, and crouched at the lake shore. Holding the paints in his hand, he respectfully looked up to the assembled guests, blushing with utter shame. Having returned to his home, he admonished his sons with these words: "When I was young, I devoted myself to book learning, and had the good fortune to escape from ignorance. I followed my inclination to letters, and was not inferior to my fellow students. But I became known only as a painter. To be used [now] as a menial workman is the greatest possible humiliation. Let me warn you severely: do not practice this lowly skill."[20]

Elsewhere in the biography of Yen Li-pen it is stated that he became a high official despite, not because of, being a painter. A similar attitude prevailed in the ninth century. Chu Ching-hsüan, writing probably in the early 840s,[21] says of the painter Ch'eng Hsiu-chi: "From the Chen-yüan era [785-805] on, he was the only individual at the capital who owed his advancement to the art of painting, and was continually graced by the imperial favor."[22] In the first detailed history of Chinese painting, the *Li-tai ming-hua chi* (Record of Famous Painters of Successive Dynasties) by Chang Yen-yüan, completed in or around 847, the author finds it necessary to go to great lengths to demonstrate the respectability of painting. Some of his arguments recall those used by the European champions of the fine arts during the Renaissance. Just as the Italians cited passages from classical authors which dealt with literature and applied them to painting, so Chang quotes classical texts praising the art of writing, implying that painting is to be equated with writing. He also manipulates the multiple meanings of the word *t'u* (charts, maps, paintings). Historical records indicating high regard for charts and maps are cited as if they referred to paintings.[23]

The final emancipation of painters occurred during the Sung dynasty (960-1280), when painting was introduced into the official system of education and civil service. It should be remembered that, under the

[19] As one would call for a master carpenter or a kitchen chef.

[20] *Chiu T'ang-shu* (Po-na ed.), 77.7a-b, also in *Li-tai ming-hua chi* (note 17 above), 9.4a-b. Whether the story is true or not, it is at any rate significant for the attitude of the T'ang historiographers. It has previously been translated by Tomita Kojiro, "Portraits of the Emperors," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* (Boston), XXX (1932), 4; and by Hu Shih, "A Historian Looks at Chinese Painting," *Asia*, XLI (1941), 217. Dr. Hu in his essay also elucidates several other matters on which I have touched in this paper. Shorter versions of the story appear in *Hsin T'ang-shu* (Po-na ed.), 100.8a and in *T'ang-ch'ao ming-hua lu* by Chu Ching-hsüan, in *Wang shih hua-yüan* (photolith reprint, T'ai-tung t'u-shu chü, 1922), 6.5a, the latter translated by Alexander C. Soper in *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America*, IV (1950), 11.

[21] See Soper, p. 5.

[22] Translation by Soper, p. 18.

[23] See the Chinese text with translation and detailed commentary by William R. B. Acker in his *Some T'ang and pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden, 1954), pp. 61-110.

Chinese civil-service system, state examinations were the main gateway to an official career. The chief subjects of the examinations were the Confucian classics, with orthodox commentaries, and literary exercises in poetry and prose. To help candidates prepare for these difficult examinations, a number of government schools were maintained in the imperial capitals. To the subjects taught in these institutions painting was added in the tenth century, and at the beginning of the twelfth century Emperor Hui-tsung—himself a distinguished painter—set up painting examinations as part of the state examination system. These examinations were adapted from the literary examinations, that is, the candidates were given themes, usually one or two lines from a poem, which they were to express in painting (showing to what extent painting was still dominated by poetry). The importance of these painting "academies" and examinations for the selection of officials has sometimes been exaggerated, but there is no doubt that painters under the Sung dynasty, especially during the reign of Hui-tsung, were honored as never before.[24]

If thus eventually, both in the East and in the West, painting achieved a status of equality and association with literature, we may now ask in what way literature took account of this affinity. The very titles of books published in Western Europe in the early seventeenth century are often revelatory. Harsdörffer's *Andachtsgemälde* are poems accompanied by illustrations. Marino's *Galleria* consists of "Pitture" and "Sculture," with each poem describing a work of art, actual or imaginary. In the titles of French poems published at that time, the words "tableau" and "portrait" frequently appear.

Not only in their book titles but in their works themselves, European baroque poets often present themselves as painters, sculptors, or architects. Jacques Davy Du Perron writes:

> Je veux bâtir un temple à l'Inconstance,
> Tous amoureux y viendront adorer...
> Tout à l'entour, je peindrai mainte image
> D'erreur, d'oubli et d'infidélité...[25]

Hofmannswaldau concludes his "Abriß eines verliebten" with these lines:

> Und daß ich nicht zuviel von einer sache sage,
> Die allen ist bekannt als allgemeine plage,

[24] On the painting academies, see T'eng Ku, "Duarum artis picturae scholarum, nempe *Yüan-t'i* ac *Wen-jen*, conspectus historicus traditur" (in Chinese), *Fu-jen hsüeh-chih*, II,2 (Sept. 1930), 65-85; A. G. Wenley, "A Note on the So-Called Sung Academy of Painting," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, VI (1941), 269-272; and Shih Yai, "A Chronology of Notable Facts and Works of the Hanlin Painting Studio of the Sung Dynasty" (in Chinese), *Chung-kuo wen-hua yen-chiu hui-k'an* (Bulletin of Chinese Studies), III (1943), 327-360.

[25] "Le Temple de l'Inconstance," in *Les Poètes français*, II (Paris, 1861), 358.

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So muß der vorhang weg. Das mahlwerk ist vollbracht,
Hier hat der mahler selbst sein ebenbild gemacht.[26]

Even more popular than the self-portrait was the portrait of the beloved. An example by Johannes Plavius follows (it does not matter that the poet in this case speaks not for himself but for the bridegroom who commissioned the poem). The excerpt is significant also in its emphasis on the insufficiency of both poetry and painting:

Rosemund mein liebelein
Wenn es könte müglich seyn
Vnnd mein wünsch nicht wär vmbsonst
Wünscht' ich mir Apellis konst.
Daß ich euch / ihr engel-zier /
Könt' abmahlen nach gebür /
Nach gebür ewr äuglein-klar /
Nach gebür ewr gülden haar . . .

Ach mein wunsch ist nur ein tandt!
Kan auch wol die mahler hand /
Welche zwar den leib entreisst /
Mahlen solch einn hohen geist /
Der mit tugend wol geziert
Ihren schönen leib regiert? . . .[27]

A typical turn is taken in a poem by Jean Auvray. It begins by describing an actual painting and ends up with these lines, which transform the poem itself into a painting:

Je vous offre donc ces figures
Où ma plume fut mon pinceau;
Mais je leur destine un rideau
Si vous n'en aimez les peintures.[28]

Instead of pretending to be a painter himself, the poet may also call on an imaginary painter to do the work for him. For example, Quevedo begins a poetic description:

A la sombra de Batilo
pon, pintor, un árbol verde . . .[29]

This poem, to be sure, is not original with Quevedo. It is a free rendition of a Greek poem, wrongly attributed to Anacreon.[30] But it is precisely in such translations and imitations that we can establish the tendencies and tastes of a poet, by seeing clearly what he accepted, rejected, altered, or added. In this case, Quevedo took the elements of

[26] *Hoch- und Spätbarock*, ed. Herbert Cysarz (Leipzig, 1937), pp. 209-210.
[27] *Danziger Barockdichtung*, ed. Heinz Kindermann (Leipzig, 1939), p. 70.
[28] "Le Tableau de l'Aurore," in *Anthologie poétique française, XVII^e siècle*, ed. Maurice Allem (Paris, n.d.), I, 190-192.
[29] *Obras completas de don Francisco de Quevedo Villegas: Obras en verso*, ed. Luis Astrana Marín (Madrid, 1932), p. 694.
[30] *Anacreontica*, 18.

the picture from pseudo-Anacreon, but he added the painter. In other words, his idyllic landscape is not a static and finished product but a work of art, a painting, which comes into being before his (and our) very eyes. The tree is literally put into the picture. Lyric poetry becomes both pictorial and dramatic.

While Quevedo here conjures up an imaginary painter, other poets appeal to real painters for aid and inspiration. Thus Marino, in describing the death of Adonis, invokes the painter Morazzone, who had done a picture of the dying Adonis:

> Spira a gli inchiostri miei di vita privi
> L'aura vital de la tua nobil arte,
> Ed a ritrarlo ancor morto, ma bello,
> Insegni a la mia penna il tuo pennello.
> (*Adone*, XVIII, 99)

By the skillful use of a pun (*penna—pennello*), the poet underlines both the contrast and the affinity between the two arts.

Marino is known to have been a great admirer and collector of paintings, and the tribute which he pays here and elsewhere to the painter's art is at the same time an acknowledgment of the limitations of his own craft, poetry. Similarly, Crashaw, who was a painter as well as a poet, feels that neither art form is sufficient in itself:

> I paint so ill my peece had need to be
> Painted again by some good Poesie.
> I write so ill, my slender Line is scarce
> So much as th' Picture of a well-lim'd verse...[31]

Painting is here no fiction; a picture actually accompanied the poem. But the two arts are not merely placed side by side; they penetrate and complete each other.

Some of the concepts already encountered, and others not yet discussed, are found in a Portuguese poem from the collection *A fénix renascida*. The author is believed to be Jerónimo Baía. It is entitled "Retrato," and paints the charms of the beautiful Fílis. It contains the following passage:

> Vi-a, e logo amor,
> Vi-a, e Febo logo,
> Quer que pinte a côres,
> Quer que cante a coros.
>
> Meti-me em debuxos
> E saí com tonos.
> Quem me fôra Apeles!
> Quem me fôra Apolo![32]

[31] "With a Picture Sent to a Friend," in *Steps to the Temple, Delights of the Muses, and Other Poems*, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge, 1904), p. 127.

[32] *A poesia lírica cultista e conceptista*, ed. Hernâni Cidade, 2nd ed. (Lisbon, 1942), p. 3.

I saw her, and at once Love—
I saw her, and Phoebus at once—
Bids me paint in colors—
Bids me sing in choruses.

I applied myself to drawings
And came out with melodies.
If only I had an Apelles!
If only I had an Apollo!

It will be noted that alternate lines are devoted to "painting" and to "singing" (which here subsumes poetry), with parallelism in each couplet, producing the effect of a neat balance of two parallel arts. The affinity of the two media is further emphasized by puns, prominently placed at the ends of successive lines: *côres* (colors) is matched by *coros* (choruses); and Apelles, the great painter of antiquity, by Apollo, the god of the Muses. The sentence beginning in the first line continues in the third; and that of the second line, in the fourth. This interweaving construction, not uncommon in Spanish and Portuguese baroque poetry, serves here to bring out the interpenetration of the two media. Their convertibility is represented in the fifth and sixth lines as an involuntary shift from visual to auditory creation—in this order, because the result is, after all, a poem. In his urge to do justice to the beauty of his beloved, the poet tries to break through the confines of his own craft, and wishes the greatest masters of both arts to perform for him what is beyond his reach. (We found the same sense of insufficiency in Plavius, Marino, and Crashaw.) He expands his creative range by usurping other media (painting and music) and by exploiting each medium to the fullest extent. (One voice is not enough, not even a chorus; there must be "choruses.")

Several seventeenth-century poets were also painters. Examples are Lope, Quevedo, and Jáuregui in Spain; Crashaw in England; Anna Roëmers Visscher in Holland; Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in Mexico. Others, like Marino, were connoisseurs and collectors of art or, like Calderón, champions and defenders of painters. This consideration may prompt an objection to my thesis that the convertibility of poetry and painting is a characteristic concept of the baroque. Is it not perfectly natural, one may ask, for a poet who is interested in painting to reflect this interest in his poetry?

To meet this objection, I submit the case of an earlier master who was outstanding both in the fine arts and in poetry, Michelangelo. His poems do indeed contain many references to sculpture and painting, but nowhere any suggestion that these arts are germane to poetry. Similarly, in eighth-century China, Wang Wei often speaks in his poems of the two media in which he worked, poetry and painting, but always separately, without suggesting any affinity be-

tween them. In one poem where he does place them side by side, he puts it like this:

> ... In this life I have usurped the fame of a poet;
> In a former existence I must have been a painter ...[33]

Thus he is clearly conscious of his achievements in both arts, but he keeps them strictly apart, speaking of them as if they belonged to two separate incarnations. (He was a devout Buddhist.) The formulation of the concept of convertibility occurs only in a later age.

The baroque urge to bring poetry and painting together takes many forms. One of the most bizarre is the figure poem, where the external shape of the written (or printed) poem is an image of the poem's subject. This device goes back to Hellenistic literature. It was first employed by Simias of Rhodes, who wrote poems in the shape of an axe, Cupid's wings, and an egg.[34] Other Greek and Roman poets followed suit, and the practice was revived occasionally during the Middle Ages. It also occurs in Persian literature, I understand, with poems written in the shape of trees, parasols, and the like.[35] Nor is it absent in China, where ingenious minds thought up an abundance of intricate poetic devices and pastimes. Poems arranged in the shape of concrete objects —a table, a bee hive, a bottle gourd, etc.—appear at a comparatively late date, from about the fifteenth century on.[36]

In seventeenth-century Europe, the figure poem was fashionable both in theory and in practice. It was seriously recommended in the poetics of France, Holland, and Germany, and practiced from time to time, though usually without serious poetic intent. Most of the baroque figure poems were occasional pieces. Thus heart-shaped poems were sent to convey amorous sentiments, cups for congratulations, crosses for condolences, and the like. The literary merit of such artificialities is of course slight, but they are an interesting expression of the desire to combine pictorial representation with poetry. The same trend may be seen in the many books of emblems and devices. While these are not confined to the baroque period, they were extremely popular at that time. In these books, picture and word have an equal share in expounding the same idea.

An interesting parallel from Sung-dynasty China are books like the *Mei-hua hsi-shen p'u*, where a hundred stages in the development of the plum blossom are shown in wood cuts, matched by a poem for each stage. The poems and the paintings on which the wood cuts are based were done by the same artist, Sung Po-jen.

From a psychological and aesthetic point of view, the convertibility

[33] *Wang Yu-ch'eng chi* (ed. in *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an*), 6.6b.
[34] See Hermann Fränkel, *De Simia Rhodio* (Göttingen, 1915), pp. 56-91.
[35] See Paul Horn, *Geschichte der persischen Litteratur* (Leipzig, 1901), p. 54.
[36] Many examples may be seen in *Hui-wen lei-chü, hsü pien.*

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of poetry and painting may be interpreted as synaesthesia.[37] But this widespread phenomenon assumes certain special aspects in the European baroque and in Sung-dynasty China. For instance, Marino's fondness, already mentioned, for turning actual and imaginary paintings and sculptures into poetry is in itself a manifestation of synæsthesia. But Marino goes further. He takes pains to show that the paintings themselves, even before they become poetry, are "audible" as well as visible. He says of a painting by Titian:

> Si vivi espressi son gli atti e i lamenti,
> ch'io vi scorgo i pensier, n'odo gli accenti.[38]

He also invents clever excuses why the "sounds" emitted by the paintings cannot always be heard, as in these lines:

> Sentirebbe l'orecchio
> del sasso i colpi e de la voce il suono,
> se del vicino rio
> non fusse il mormorio.[39]

Here he creates the illusion of two distinct sounds, one being drowned out by the other.

Another noteworthy aspect of baroque synaesthesia is that it is not necessarily limited to the two senses of sight and hearing. The sense of smell is sometimes included, as in this description of an idyllic meadow by Pedro Soto de Rojas:

> Do el olfato, la vista, y el oído
> igualmente se alegran y enriquecen
> con las flores, las fuentes, y el sonido.[40]

We note here the emphasis on the equality of the three sense perceptions, and on their mutual enrichment.

More sophisticated is a poem by Filippo Massini (died 1617) on a bird in front of a mirror. After sustained emphasis on visual elements (colors, light, reflection, the "painted image"), it ends with a surprise metamorphosis of sound into fragrance:

> Nuovo Narciso mio, volante, e vago
> ch'entro a soave lume
> di lusinghier cristallo,
> miri de le tue piume
> il nero, il verde, il giallo;
> troppo, ah troppo fe' vago
> de la picciola tua, dipinta imago.

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[37] See Albert Wellek, "Renaissance- und Barock-Synästhesie," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, IX (1931), 534-584.

[38] "Maddalena," in *Poesie varie*, ed. Benedetto Croce (Bari, 1913), p. 243.

[39] "San Girolamo," *ibid.*, p. 247.

[40] *Obras*, ed. A. Gallego Morell (Madrid, 1950), p. 149.

Già vederti mi par converso in fiore
foglie farsi le penne, e 'l canto odore.[41]

It has been shown elsewhere that birds, representing color and music in motion and thus gratifying several senses, are a favorite topic of baroque poetry.[42]

A synaesthetic metamorphosis in the opposite direction—from scent to sound—is found in China. As in Massini's poem, the transformation involves a flower. Sophisticated literati of the Sung dynasty found poetic inspiration in the odor and even the taste of fragrant plum blossoms. One of them, the twelfth-century poet Liu Han, wrote this couplet:

As with relish I chew plum buds by the little window,
Fresh verses issue from my mouth, fragrant in every word.[43]

The baroque poet may not even be satisfied with appealing to three senses simultaneously. He sometimes brings all five senses into play. This is how Markhold, the hero of Zesen's novel *Adriatische Rosemund*, describes the effect of love on his five senses:

Fünf sünnen hatt' ich fohr; itzt sein sie mihr gemindert,
ihr mund entzüht den Schmak: mein Rüchen würd gehindert:
ihr aug' entäuget mich; ihr süngen macht mich taub:
mein fühlen nümmt sie wäg. O welch ein sühßer Raub![44]

A long poem by George Chapman, entitled "Ovid's Banquet of Sense," is divided into five parts, corresponding to the five senses. It describes in turn the pleasures which Ovid receives with each of his senses as he watches the beautiful Julia, daughter of Emperor Augustus, bathing in an arbor. A similarly neat arrangement and leisurely pace are adopted by Marino in cantos VI, VII, and VIII of his *Adone*, where he describes five splendid gardens, symbolizing the five senses. (Gardens, especially baroque gardens, furnish ideal settings for poetry that deals with the gratification of all the senses.)

Approaching the same phenomenon from a different direction, one may say that the baroque tendency to appeal to more than one sense is related to the sensual complexity and the sensuous intensity of baroque art. The baroque artist may address himself to several senses

[41] "Si specchia," in *La poesia del seicento*, ed. Giovanni Getto (Turin, 1952), p. 109.

[42] See the thorough and interesting treatment of this and related subjects in Jean Rousset, *La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France: Circé et le Paon* (Paris, 1953). I have dealt with one such poem in "Quevedo's *Letrilla*, 'Flor que cantas, flor que vuelas . . . ,'" *Romance Philology*, VI (1953), 259-264.

[43] From the poem "Hsiao yen" (Small Feast), in *Hsiao-shan chi* (ed. in *Nan-Sung liu-shih chia chi*, Ku-shu liu-t'ung ch'u reprint of Chi-ku ko ed.), fol. 1b. See also "The Plum Tree in Chinese Poetry," *Asiatische Studien*, VI (1952), 111, where I have treated this matter in more detail.

[44] *Adriatische Rosemund*, ed. A. Jellinek (Halle a. S., 1899), p. 15.

simultaneously, or he may bring a wide range of stimuli to bear on one sense. If the poet concentrates on visual impressions, he will often seek out their most intensive elements—color and light—and may go to great lengths to bring out their infinite variety. This trend underlines, of course, the affinity which baroque poets felt to the art of painting.

The following passage by William Browne exemplifies the multiple arrays of colors in which baroque poets like to indulge:

> As in the Rainbowes many coloured hew,
> Here see we watchet deepned with a blew:
> There a darke tawnie with a purple mixt,
> Yealow and flame, with streakes of greene betwixt,
> A bloudy streame into a blushing run,
> And ends still with the colour which begun;
> Drawing the deeper to a lighter staine,
> Bringing the lightest to the deep'st againe,
> With such rare Art each mingleth with his fellow,
> The blew with watchet, greene and red with yealow;
> Like to the changes which we daily see
> About the Doues necke with varietie,
> Where none can say (though he it strict attends)
> Here one begins, and there the other ends:
> So did the Maidens with their various flowres
> Decke vp their windowes, and make neat their bowres:
> Vsing such cunning as they did dispose
> The ruddy Piny with the lighter Rose,
> The Moncks-hood with the Buglosse, and intwine
> The white, the blew, the flesh-like Columbine
> With Pinckes, Sweet-Williams: that farre off the eye
> Could not the manner of their mixtures spye.[45]

One notes here not only the rich variety of colors but also their constant shifting from one shade to another, and their intermingling and blending into an artfully arranged, harmonious whole—one of the aesthetic ideals of the baroque age.

Among the various colors, red and white—the brightest and most intensive colors—are favorites in baroque poetry. A predilection for red has been found in Agrippa d'Aubigné.[46] Whiteness, brightness, and light have been shown to be characteristic features of early seventeenth-century poetry.[47] Various shades and aspects of whiteness are brought out in a poem by Antonio Basso (died 1645), "Alla rosa bianca,"[48]

[45] *Britannia's Pastorals*, Book II, Song 3, in *The Whole Works of William Browne*, ed. W. Carew Hazlitt (London, 1868-69), II, 37-38.

[46] See Imbrie Buffum, *Agrippa d'Aubigné's Les Tragiques* (New Haven, 1951), pp. 77-79.

[47] See Helmut Hatzfeld, "Der Barockstil der religiösen klassischen Lyrik in Frankreich," *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft*, IV (1929), 40-44; Austin Warren, *Richard Crashaw* (University, La., 1939), p. 185; Wolfgang Kayser, *Das sprachliche Kunstwerk*, 3rd ed. (Bern, 1954), p. 124.

[48] In *La poesia del seicento*, ed. Giovanni Getto (Turin, 1952), pp. 170-171.

where he likens the white rose, in successive stanzas, to dawn, milk, snow, a silver cup, a shell, and a dove.

Several of the baroque concepts considered so far—the equality of literature and the figurative arts, the artist's feeling of insufficiency, the appeal to several senses simultaneously, the search for multiplicity and intensity—all these are connected with a fundamental baroque trend which manifests itself in the fluidity between various genres and media[49] and in the groping for an all-inclusive work of art, a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. In such an ideal creation, the borderlines between poetry and painting (and other art forms) naturally vanish. Thus what William Browne said of the harmony of colors also applies to the originally diverse elements which make up the ideal baroque creation, the harmoniously unified work of art:

> Where none can say (though he it strict attends)
> Here one begins, and there the other ends.

So much for the convertibility of poetry and painting in Europe. As pointed out above, a similar concept is found in Chinese literature from the eleventh century on. But the foundations on which the concept was built in China differ from the European parallel in important respects.

Tools play an important role in the development of an art form, and may even represent it to the outside world. Thus in Europe, as we have seen, the difference between literature and painting was often symbolized by the pen and the brush. In China, however, writers and painters early came to use the same tool, the hair brush. Known in crude form from the beginning of historical times, it was gradually developed and refined until, around the first century of the Christian era, it had become a marvelously versatile and subtle instrument that served both the man of letters and the painter. This unique tool, applied to the rich potentialities of the Chinese script, caused writing to develop not only as a utilitarian vehicle but also as a form of art, calligraphy. The art of writing with the brush became an indispensable part of the education of the man of letters. Naturally, the arduous technical training required in calligraphy, with its disciplined control of brush strokes and lines, was also an excellent preparation for painting. Thus calligraphy formed an important link between literature and painting.

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[49] "Un rasgo seicentista, bien marcado en la obra de Lope, acarreó casi todos sus desaciertos: aquella ilimitación de los motivos artísticos por la cual todo era utilizable para todo: una seguidilla era una comedia posible, una comedia podía transformarse en soneto, una chacona o una zarabanda en auto sacramental" (José F. Montesinos in his introduction to Lope de Vega's *Poesías líricas*, Madrid, 1925-26, I, 52). "What would he [Plato] have said had he lived to see John Dowland's *Lachrymae or Seven Teares, Figured in Seaven Passionate Pavans* (1605) or, similarly, the *tombeaux of* the seventeenth century, which were dirges, frequently written *en forme d'allemande*, that is, in the form of a dance . . ." (Curt Sachs, *The Commonwealth of Art*, New York, 1946, p. 230).

It is noteworthy that calligraphy and painting were virtually the only arts in which the literati interested themselves. Other arts such as sculpture and architecture, which in the European Renaissance rose to respectability together with painting, were classified as crafts in mediaeval China, as was the painting done by unlettered professionals.

The kind of painting done by literati, in contrast to professional painting, is often described by the term *wen-jen hua* (painting of the man of letters, or learned man's painting). This is a useful term, provided one keeps in mind the different meanings it has when used in reference to different periods. The term was created and popularized by Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1556-1636), who applied it to his own "Southern School" of painting, setting it above and apart from a "Northern School" of "academic" painters. He derived the "Southern School" in a straight line from Wang Wei, the great poet-painter of the eighth century. Tung's views, significant as they are for the late Ming dynasty, are not necessarily valid for other periods. We are concerned here with the concept of painting as a special province of the man of letters, and with the significance which this concept acquired in the eleventh century.

As stated above, the tendency among some literati to take up painting as an avocation goes back at least to the second century of our era. By the eleventh century, this trend had assumed such proportions that it was no longer unusual for a man of letters to be also a painter. At the same time, professional painters had won a greater measure of respectability, and were enjoying imperial protection and favor in the painting academies. But as the professionals developed their own theories of academic realism and mannerism, the literati asserted their superiority, taking advantage of the lingering prejudice against professional painting as a mere craft. They proclaimed that mastery of the brush in calligraphy and painting depends not so much on technical training as on the cultural refinement which comes from wide reading.[50] One of their leading spokesmen, the poet-painter Su Shih, said in one of his poems:

> Discarded brushes piled mountain-high are nothing to be prized,
> After you read a myriad books you begin to reach the spirit.[51]

And in the twelfth century Teng Ch'un wrote in his book on painting: "Rare are those who, being accomplished in literature, fail to understand painting. Rare are those who, lacking accomplishment in literature, understand painting."[52]

Su Shih and his followers also insisted that true painting, in close

[50] See T'eng Ku's article cited above (note 24); also his "Su Tung P'o als Kunstkritiker," *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, n.s., VIII (1932), 104-110; and his "Chinesische Malkunsttheorie der T'ang- und Sungzeit," *ibid.*, X (1934), 157-175, 236-251, XI (1935), 28-57.

[51] *Tung-p'o hsien-sheng shih* (ed. in *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an*), 11.14a.

[52] *Hua chi* (ed. in *Hsüeh-chin t'ao-yüan*, 11th ser.), 9.1a-b.

association with its sister art, poetry, must never be a slavish copy of the objects depicted, and opposed the realism that was often advocated by the professional painters of the time. Su Shih sets forth his position in this poem:

> To criticize paintings on the basis of resemblance in appearance
> Is a view that borders on childishness.
> Those who write poems of such kind (of resemblance)
> Are surely not men who understand poetry.
> Poetry and painting are based on the same laws,
> Namely, natural talent and fresh originality.[53]

The antirealistic trend of the literary painters was enhanced by the gradual ascendancy of monochrome over color painting. As early as the mid-ninth century, Chang Yen-yüan wrote: "For this reason one may be said to have fulfilled one's aim if one can furnish (a painting) with all the five colours by the management of ink (alone). But if one's mind dwells on the five colours (only) then the shapes of things will go wrong."[54] From the tenth century on, there was a trend toward using only one color or black ink alone. Thus painting was moving still closer toward calligraphy. The literati developed a type of inspirational, impressionistic painting which in their view was intimately allied to poetry and calligraphy. They called it *mo hsi* (ink play), thus emphasizing its nonprofessional, nonacademic nature. One of its pioneers, Wen T'ung (1018-79), became famous for his bamboo paintings in black ink. Red bamboos were first painted by Su Shih.[55]

In the Chinese tradition, an innovation in literature or the arts is more easily accepted when shown to be not an innovation at all but a continuation of respectable precedents. That is one reason why Su Shih and other literary painters of the eleventh century took pains to establish Wang Wei as their forerunner—a role for which he seems ill fitted on the basis of what is known about his paintings today. Often quoted is the observation in which Su Shih epitomized his view of the convertibility of poetry and painting in Wang Wei: "Savoring Wang Wei's poems, one finds painting in his poetry. Contemplating Wang Wei's paintings, one finds poetry in his painting."[56] Similarly Ou-yang

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[53] *Tung-p'o hsien-sheng shih*, 11.29a.

[54] Translation by Acker, *op. cit.*, p. 185. Dr. Acker points out in a footnote that "this is the first definite formulation and justification of the attitude, later so universal in China and Japan, that ink painting is essentially superior to painting in colours."

[55] See T'eng Ku, "Tuschespiele," *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, n.s., VIII (1932), 249-255.

[56] *Tung-p'o t'i-pa* (ed. in *Chin-tai pi-shu*, 12th ser.), 5.1a. Following the tranditional interpretation of this statement, I take it to refer to Wang Wei's poetry and painting in general. I do not agree with Arthur Waley (*An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting*, London, 1923, p. 144), who believes Su Shih is merely discussing the genuineness of one particular poem and the painting on which it is inscribed.

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Hsiu (1007-72), in a poem in which he discusses both painting and poetry, praises a poem by his friend Mei Yao-ch'en for coming close to the supposed impressionistic spirit of the ancient masters of painting:

> In ancient paintings they painted the meaning, not the appearance.
> Mei's poem sings of his subject with no feeling unexpressed.
> Few are they who know how to forget the appearance and
> to capture the meaning.
> It is better to read a poem like an (ancient) painting.[57]

The close association which poetry and painting developed in the course of many centuries manifested itself in numerous ways in both arts. Even at an early period, painters who were trained in literature made conscious efforts to recreate favorite poems through the medium of painting. For example, in the biography of the famous poet-painter Ku K'ai-chih (ca. 345-ca. 406) we read: "He greatly valued Hsi K'ang's four-character line poems, and took them as themes for his paintings. Often he commented: 'It is easy to paint his

> Hand plucking the five strings,

but not his

> Eyes meanwhile following the homeward-faring geese.' "[58]

The influence worked both ways. There is much in Chinese poetry even before the Sung dynasty that can be explained as representing the painter's point of view.[59]

The succesful combination of poetry, calligraphy, and painting often received special notice, and matching masterpieces in these different media were highly prized. Down to the T'ang dynasty, if one individual was accomplished in all three arts, such versatility was noted as something extraordinary, as in the case of Cheng Ch'ien (eighth century). His biography in the *New History of the T'ang Dynasty* states: "He once wrote out some of his poems in his own handwriting, matched them with paintings, and presented the work to the throne. The Emperor inscribed at the end in large letters the words: 'The three perfections of Cheng Ch'ien.' "[60] Tu Fu, in a poem honoring the late Cheng Ch'ien, also mentions this incident.[61]

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[57] *Chü-shih chi* (in *Ou-yang Wen-chung-kung chi*, ed. in *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an*), 6.7b.

[58] Translation by Chen Shih-hsiang, *Biography of Ku K'ai-chih* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1953), p. 15.

[59] For a good discussion of this matter, with examples, see Lin Yu-tang, "The Technique and Spirit of Chinese Poetry," *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, LXVI (1935), 31-41.

[60] *Hsin T'ang-shu* (Po-na ed.), 202.11b.

[61] Text in *Concordance to the Poems of Tu Fu* (Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supp. No. 14), II, 212-213; translated by E. von Zach, *Tu Fu's Gedichte* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), pp. 475-477.

From what has been said about the constantly closer association of poetry and painting, it is understandable that in the eleventh century there arose the concept that the two arts may take each other's place. A characteristic instance occurs in a statement attributed to the great painter Mi Fu (1051-1107; his name is often misread Mi Fei): "Once I took a walk at the lake in the moonlight with Master [Li] Ta-kuan and others; every one wrote a poem, only I composed a soundless poem."[62] The term "soundless poem" as a metaphor for painting came into vogue in the eleventh century. It occurs in a couplet by Huang T'ing-chien (1045-1105):

> Li had verses ready but would not utter them,
> With light ink he brought forth a soundless poem.[63]

We are reminded of Simonides' "silent poetry."

The catalogue of paintings in the imperial collection, compiled during the reign of Hui-tsung (1101-26), that great patron of painting, refers to painting and poetry as "two sides of the same thing" (*hsiang piao li*).[64]

As a concluding example, I offer two lines from a poem by Lu Yu (1125-1210):

> The red fire in the stove is out, the ashes are like snow.
> Alone with the bluish lamp, I sit and paint poetry.[65]

Here the emphasis on the visual elements of color (red, white, blue) and light (fire, lamp) prepares the reader for the climax, where the poet merges his own medium with its visual counterpart.

This paper has been limited both in range and in treatment. The concept of the convertibility of poetry and painting has been observed in one period of Chinese literature and in another period of Western European literature. I have not considered the merits of the concept itself, about which there has been much controversy in the Western world, particularly since Lessing's *Laokoon*.

Several matters with which I have dealt in a summary and simplified way, and others on which I have touched only slightly or not at all, could profitably be studied in more detail. One could show, for instance, how the concept of the affinity of two media developed in conformity with certain formal patterns, such as parallelism (both in verse and in prose) in China, paradox and antithesis in the West. One could further show that some of the phenomena found in the relationship between poetry and painting apply also to other media. It is known that baroque poetry reached over not only into painting but also into music.

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[62] Teng Ch'un, *Hua chi* (ed. in *Hsüeh-chin t'ao-yüan*, 11th ser.), 3.4b-5a.

[63] *Yü-chang Huang hsien-sheng wen-chi* (ed. in *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an*), 5.7a. Li is the poet-painter Li Kung-lin (died 1106).

[64] *Hsüan-ho hua-p'u* (ed. in *Hsüeh-chin t'ao-yüan*, 11th ser.), 15.1b.

[65] *Ching-hsüan Lu Fang-weng shih-chi* (ed. in *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an*), 7.49a.

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In the Spanish *Romancero nuevo*, for example, music became an indispensable element.[66] Similarly in China, a new genre of poetry, the *tz'u*, arose in the tenth and eleventh centuries, with music and words as equal partners.

The baroque conception of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* is evident also in the typical baroque castle with its surrounding park, in city planning, and above all in the Italian opera.[67] But its realizations were shortlived. There is no parallel in Western civilization for the harmonious association, mutual inspiration, and blending of various art forms that were cultivated by the Chinese literati for many centuries.

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[66] See José F. Montesinos, "Algunos problemas del Romancero nuevo," *RP*, VI (1953), 234-238.

[67] See Carl J. Friedrich, *The Age of the Baroque, 1610-1660* (New York, 1952), pp. 40, 83; Curt Sachs, *The Commonwealth of Art* (New York, 1946), p. 132 and *passim*.

# RENAISSANCE HIEROGLYPHICS

LISELOTTE DIECKMANN

AROUND A.D. 100 Plutarch wrote an essay on Isis and Osiris, which relates the myths of these two Egyptian deities, their son Horus, and their enemy Typhon. Plutarch was probably an initiate in the mystery cult for which the legends formed the basis; he had traveled to Egypt and he speaks with authority. The purpose of his essay is to explain the myths. The time has passed, he thinks, when these legends can be believed to report what actually happened to actual gods; such primitive belief he calls superstition. On the other hand, it would be atheism to assume that the legends contain no truth at all. The only true interpretation of the myths, then, is a philosophical one which understands them as tangible representations of universal ideas, as allegories of some philosophical and moral truth.

Plutarch sees in the myth of Isis and Osiris not only the presentation of specific natural phenomena (Isis is Egypt, Osiris the fertilizing Nile, Typhon the sea, etc.) but also the personification of the heavenly bodies (Isis the moon, Osiris the sun, etc.) and even of the elements (Osiris is water, Isis the earth, etc.). He gives a very complex interpretation on several levels—all of them connected with natural phenomena and the structure of the universe.

Allegorical interpretation of old myths was not new in Plutarch's time. In the Alexandrian world, that great melting pot of peoples, ideas, and religions, it had the advantage of integrating many myths from many countries and many religions. It constituted an attempt to interpret all of these legends and beliefs as specific representations of one and the same philosophical truth, namely as manifestations of Neoplatonic ideas. This Neoplatonic, often strongly mystical view of the world and man's position in it was applied not only to legends, but also to many types of pictorial or sculptural representations.

The Egyptian myths were generally believed to have originally been revealed either by the gods themselves or by some human whom they instructed. According to ancient reports there existed, in the temple of Isis at Saïs, certain carved columns containing such age-old wisdom. Plutarch reports the inscription on one of them:

> At Saïs in the vestibule of the temple of Athena [i.e., Isis] was carved a babe, and an aged man, and after this a hawk, and next a fish, and finally a hippopotamus. The symbolic meaning was: "O ye, that are coming into the world and departing from it, God hateth shamelessness." The babe is the symbol of coming into the world, and the aged man the symbol of departing from it; and by a hawk they indicate God, by the fish hatred and by the hippopotamus shamelessness; for it is said that he kills his sire and forces his mother to mate with him.

The explanation for the fish as hatred is this:

> Osiris is the Nile that fertilizes the land, and Typhon is the sea into which the Nile falls... Therefore the priests hate the sea... and they do not allow salt on their tables, nor do they greet pilots. And this is not the least reason why they discard fish, and they use the picture of a fish as the hieroglyph of hatred...[1]

I have chosen Plutarch's essay as a starting point, not because it was the only or even the foremost source for Renaissance scholars, but rather because it displays certain ways of thinking which, during the Renaissance, were revived, transformed, and lovingly applied by scholars as well as painters, writers, and philosophers.

Plutarch was wrong in calling these carved symbols hieroglyphs. Not all of his symbols occur in true hieroglyphic inscriptions. However, by his time, the true hieroglyphs were no longer understood; they were supplanted by later types of writing, among others the writing described in Plutarch's essay and by many other ancient writers, and generally called enigmatic hieroglyphics. These symbols were thought to represent ideas rather than letters or sounds, and the ideas were considered to be the secret wisdom preserved by the priests, which only the initiated could decipher. The enigmatic hieroglyphics may, of course, be based on older animal legends; but their specific philosophic interpretation is clearly an outgrowth of Neoplatonic thinking.

According to many ancient authorities, the columns at Saïs were carved by the demigod Theut, mentioned in Plato's *Phaedrus* as the inventor of writing and many other crafts. He was identified with the Greek god Hermes and the Roman Mercury, who consequently came to be the revealer of Egyptian myths, of enigmatic writing, and of astrology and alchemy. The enigmatic hieroglyphics were thus linked to much of the late ancient esoteric wisdom, which they, in part, concealed as well as revealed. They occur in the so-called *Hermetic Books*, a collection of oracular writings which were written down probably in the second century A.D. and were named after Hermes, whose wisdom they were assumed to profess. They also appear as alchemical symbols for the various processes by which baser metals were turned into gold. Alchemy, in turn, was believed closely connected with astrology; each metal was thought to have a mysterious but very real correspondence or sympathy to one of the planets. Thus Mercury is not only the name but also the enigmatic hieroglyphic for the planet as well as the metal. Another famous enigmatic hieroglyphic is the serpent biting its own tail, a symbol for year, or time, or the universe, or the completion of the alchemical process. As a symbol of time it became the attribute of Saturn.[2]

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[1] *De Iside et Osiride*, xxxii. The translation is adapted from the many Renaissance translations of the text.

[2] When, in Goethe's *Märchen*, in the *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewan-*

One work of late antiquity on enigmatic hieroglyphics (either second or fourth century A.D.) stands out for the particular role it was to play during the Renaissance—Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica*, a work allegedly and perhaps really translated from Egyptian into Greek. Exclusively devoted to the description of enigmatic hieroglyphics, it consists of short paragraphs, each describing either a symbol, generally but not always an animal, and the particular story or attribute which makes the symbol fit to stand for a certain idea, or, conversely, an idea and its appropriate corresponding symbol. One example will suffice:

> To symbolize what cannot happen [i.e., the idea of impossibility], they draw men walking on water. Or, if they wish to show this otherwise, they draw a headless man walking about. Since both are impossible, they may logically be used for that.[3]

The book has two characteristic features which the Renaissance fashion took over. The first is that several symbols can stand for one and the same idea and several ideas can be expressed by one and the same symbol. The second feature is that, in spite of this variety, the symbols are believed to have a "necessary relationship" to what they symbolize. The type of correspondence which was believed to exist between the stars and the metals exists also between the symbol and its idea. This is a mystic thought, based on a belief in the order of the universe according to which the same properties (e.g., impossibility) participate in nature, in the world of man, and also in the world of ideas.

Horapollo's book, unknown to the Middle Ages, was found in 1419 on the Isle of Andros in the Aegean by a Florentine monk, who took it back to Florence. There it stirred the minds of the humanists because they believed to have found in it the key for deciphering the Egyptian obelisks lying among the Roman ruins and soon to be erected by several Popes. This fallacy was a tenacious one, believed by everyone until Champollion in 1822 finally found the true key for deciphering the hieroglyphs. But deep into the nineteenth century Horapollo's book was *the* authority on the subject.

The belief that the enigmatic hieroglyphics were the true and oldest Egyptian writing was strongly supported, in the second half of the fifteenth century, by Marsilio Ficino. He translated most of the *Hermetic Books* and many late Neoplatonic philosophers into Latin, thus making them known to the Latin-speaking world and lending to these philosophers and mystics the authority of his name. Following ancient

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*derten*, the serpent finally seizes the end of its tail with its teeth and lies in a magic circle, we have a late eighteenth-century example of an old enigmatic hieroglyph.

[3] The first Latin translation of the work is by Fasanini (Venice, 1505) under the title: *Ori Apollinis Niliaci Hieroglyphica.* The most recent English translation, with an excellent introduction, is by George Boas: *The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo* (New York, 1950).

tradition, to a certain extent, but formulating it more precisely and sharply, Ficino established a chronology of the oldest philosophers from Hermes-Theut at the head of the list to Plato at the end.[4] This is of course the reverse of the real historical development. Thus, Ficino's chronology added another fallacy to the hieroglyphical tradition confirming the fallacy that the enigmatic hieroglyphs were the oldest Egyptian writing, representing ideas rather than sounds. The combination of these two basic historical errors produced the hieroglyphic fashion between 1500 and 1700, and helped to delay the deciphering of the real hieroglyphics for several centuries. However, these errors proved to be very fruitful in the realms of painting and literature.

Painters in the fifteenth century, always looking for picturesque symbols, found in Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica* a rich source of new and fascinating symbols whose meanings, known only to the initiated few, would be lost on the vulgar crowd. Initiation now came to mean something less mysterious, above all something everybody could acquire for himself, namely a vast and solid knowledge of ancient texts. The community of scholars, which included philosophers as well as painters and writers, felt themselves the fortunate initiates into a wonderful world. Under the impact of the recent invention of printing, everything that had meaning was considered, metaphorically, a book; thus paintings were being "read," just as the book of nature was being read. Moreover, painted symbols had a great advantage over spoken or written language, since they conveyed meanings independently of any particular language—they represented ideas pure and simple. To the rich storehouse of Christian mediaeval symbolism (itself partly derived from Egyptian symbols) and newly discovered Graeco-Roman symbolism, the humanists added with relish the enigmatic hieroglyphics.

The woodcut which most closely follows Horapollo is Albrecht Dürer's "The Emperor Maximilian, surrounded by symbolic animals."[5] We have the written text, in Latin and in German, which served as a basis for Dürer's work. The Latin is by Willibald Pirckheimer, printed in his works under the title, *Interpretatio quarundam literarum Aegyptiacarum ex Oro Niliaco*.[6] The German text was written by Maximil-

[4] Preface to his translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. See P. O. Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* (New York, 1943), pp. 25-26.

[5] The importance of Horapollo's book for the history of art was first pointed out by Karl Giehlow in "Die Hieroglyphenkunde in der Allegorie der Renaissance: *Hieroglyphik und Emblematik in ihren Beziehungen* (Leipzig, 1923). XXXII (1915), 1-132. See also Ludwig Volkmann, *Bilderschriften der Renaissance: Hieroglyphik und Emblematik in ihren Bezienhungen* (Leipzig, 1923). In his book on *Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton, 1943), Erwin Panofsky has used Giehlow's material and much enlarged upon it. I am indebted to Professor Panofsky, as well as to Professor Boas, Professor Kristeller, and Miss Frances Yates for much valuable information received in personal conversations.

[6] In *Opera Politica, Philologica et Epistologica*. I have used the edition of

ian's court historiographer Stabius and has the following title: "Ein misterium der alten Egiptischen buchstaben herkumend von dem Kunig Osyris."[7] Another humanist at Maximilian's court, Konrad Peutinger, had, on the demand of the Emperor himself, tried to trace the latter's family tree back to Osiris.[8] The whole group of humanists surrounding this great Emperor was enthralled with the new fashion and Dürer's woodcut is the result of common studies and discussions. Dürer had already illustrated Pirckheimer's translation of Horapollo's First Book, and was also collaborating on the large triumphal arch of Maximilian of which the woodcut was to be the centerpiece.

The woodcut shows an emperor surrounded by a dog wearing a stole, a lion, a bull, a falcon on an orb, a cock on a serpent, a crane raising its foot, and feet walking through water by themselves. On the emperor's crown there is a star and a basilisk, eagles are embroidered on the cloth of honor, he holds a scepter encircled by a snake, and sits on a sheaf of papyrus. Dew is descending from the sky. The text to this somewhat crowded picture is:

> Maximilian, a prince of great piety, most magnanimous, powerful and courageous, ennobled by imperishable and eternal fame, descending from ancient lineage, Roman Emperor, endowed with all the gifts of nature and possessed of art and learning and master of a great part of the terrestial globe, has with warlike virtue and great discretion won a shining victory over the mighty king here indicated [the King of France, symbolized by the cock] and thereby watchfully protected himself from the strategems of said enemy, which has been deemed impossible by all mankind.

A few examples of this "translation" from the drawing into words will suffice to show the principle: The dog wrapped in a stole means "prince," the star on the emperor's crown means "of great piety," the lion means "most magnanimous, powerful, and courageous," etc. Except for the cock, a fairly recent symbol for France, and the eagle, a Roman symbol for the Roman emperor, all the symbols are taken directly from Horapollo.

But much of the impact of such symbolic drawings is lost when words are needed to explain the symbols. Their aesthetic pleasure lay precisely in the fact that each idea contained in the symbols should flash upon the onlooker's mind, creating a unity of intellectual and aesthetic experience, of sense impression and conveyed thought. Dürer's

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1610 (Frankfurt), in which the Horapollo passages are on pp. 202-203. To each phrase of the text Pirckheimer adds the corresponding entire paragraph from Horapollo's work. At the end there is the following note: "Bilibaldus Pirckheimerus colligebat, destinabatque honori Invictissimi Imp. Caroli V. posteaquam is Franciscum I. Galliarum Regem victum coeperat." Originally, however, the text was written for Maximilian. Dürer is not mentioned.

[7] Stabius' text exists only in manuscript, but is described in detail by Giehlow.

[8] See Theodor Herberger, *Conrad Peutinger in seinem Verhältnis zum Kaiser Maximilian I* (Augsburg, 1851).

woodcut reflects the Neoplatonic concept of vision, according to which the eye is a higher organ than those of hearing, smell, or taste; the eye is, so to speak, a physical and intellectual organ which, through its peculiar power of vision, reaches the world of ideas by means of heightened sense impression.

Enigmatic hieroglyphics soon became popular for all kinds of symbolic figures. We find them on coins, enigmatically identifying the prince who issued them, on coats of arms, and on lucky charms. They appear as printers' marks, such as the famous dolphin wound around an anchor, meaning *festina lente*, the mark of the Aldine bookshop at Venice, and the snake biting its tail and surrounding two storks, the mark of Plantin at Antwerp.

A main outgrowth of the hieroglyphic fashion was the so-called emblem book. The first one, by Alciati, was dedicated to Peutinger. An emblem consists of a picture, often but not always an enigmatic hieroglyph, a title, called Motto, and an epigram. More often than not emblems hide, under these three parts, a moral lesson. The three parts should elucidate each other. The picture is not an illustration of the text, nor the text an explanation of the picture; their purpose is a mutual elucidation of an idea. They thus have the same intent as Dürer's woodcut—the simultaneous experience of seeing and understanding. The emblem books were frequently called hieroglyphics, even if they showed no trace of Egyptian symbolism.[9]

As the sixteenth century progressed, there seems to have arisen a new reading public. The community of scholars, so clearly united during the earlier Renaissance, disappeared, and with it the immediacy characteristic of a common erudite knowledge. The enigmatic hieroglyphs were now in need of explanation. The sixteenth century thus saw the rise of learned collections of ancient myths and of ancient symbols, accompanied by long commentaries. Among these Pierio Valeriano's *Hieroglyphica*, published posthumously in 1556, is of great importance. Intended as a commentary on Horapollo, it lists systematically all known animal and plant symbols, as well as many other groups of symbols, collected in one cumbersome folio. No distinction is made between symbols of Egyptian or other origin. Each symbol is given a number of interpretations. Horapollo was now no longer read, and Pierio's learned authority was invoked in his stead.

As a result of the fad of the emblem books, which represented a combination of art and literature, terms and symbols belonging to the visual arts became the property of literature also. Emblems, devices, impresas, and especially hieroglyphics became what we call in literature

[9] No attempt can be made here to furnish bibliographical data on the problem of the emblem books. The problem and the literature are far beyond the scope of this paper.

"conceits."[10] Hieroglyphics were, around 1600, the common ground on which art and poetry met. They served not only both arts, but also the various combinations of these two art forms. An outstanding example is Ben Jonson's masques, where pictorial and literary representations were joined with architecture, music, and dancing. The artistic purpose of such a rich pageantry was to set all sense organs of the audience into play and to make appear, through and beyond these sense impressions, the intellectual significance and the true philosophical meaning of the whole. Ben Jonson himself once called the masque a court-hieroglyphic.[11]

The *Masque of Blacknesse* (1605) and its somewhat later sequel, the *Masque of Beauty* (1608), are of special interest. In the *Masque of Blacknesse*, as the black daughters of the Aethiopian river Niger come to shore and dance in pairs, Jonson gives the following stage direction:

> Here the Tritons sounded, and they danced on shore, every couple, as they advanced, severally presenting their fans: in one of which were inscribed their mixed names, in the other a mute hieroglyphick, expressing their mixed qualities.

And in a footnote Jonson adds:

> Which manner of symbol [i.e., mute hieroglyphick, mute because it is not explained in the text] I rather chose, than imprese, as well for strangeness, as relishing of antiquity, and more applying to that original doctrine of sculpture, which the Egyptians are said to have brought from the Aethiopians.

The story of the Aethiopians bringing the hieroglyphics to Egypt is another ancient legend, which is not relevant here. Among the mute hieroglyphics are a pair of naked feet in a river, a salamander, a cloud full of rain dropping, etc., i.e., the well-known hieroglyphics of Horapollo—quoted, however, from Valeriano's book.

The *Masque of Blacknesse* and the *Masque of Beautie* are really a Neoplatonic interpretation of the world, elegantly and ingeniously dressed in a court show which simultaneously flattered the king, emphasized a certain political situation, fitted the particular occasion for which they were written, and offered a pleasantly rich pageantry in

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[10] The formulation stems from Frances Yates, "The Emblematic Conceit in Giordano Bruno's *De gli eroici furori* and the Elizabethan Sonnet Sequence," *Journ. of the Warburg and Courtault Inst.*, VI (1943). Literary terminology is anything but clear in the seventeenth century, in spite of innumerable attempts at systematization. Symbol and allegory on the literary side and emblem, device, impresa on the pictorial side are all called hieroglyphics, quite independently of any Egyptian content.

[11] In "An Expostulation with Inigo Jones," in *Works*, ed. Herford and Simpson, VIII, 402 ff. The following discussion of Ben Jonson is largely based on J. D. Gordon, "The Imagery of Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Blacknesse* and *The Masque of Beautie*," *Journ. of the Warburg and Courtault Inst.*, VI (1943), 122-141. See also Allardyce Nicoll, *Stuart Masques* (London, 1937); D. C. Allen, "Ben Jonson and the Hieroglyphics," *PQ*, XVIII (1939), 290-300; A. H. Gilbert, *The Symbolic Persons in the Masques of Ben Jonson* (Durham, 1948).

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which the members of the court could participate and all the arts could concur. But, stripped of all this lavish ornamentation, the basic story of the two masques will be by now a familiar one: The daughters of Niger of Aethiopia desire to lose their blackness. In a strange vision they are told to travel toward the land of the sun (Albion, of course; in the original story it would be Egypt), where they will lose it. The moon, Isis, is their guide. During the trip some of them are attacked by black Night and kept imprisoned on an island; but after some toils they are saved by their sisters with the help of Isis. "The night's black charms are flown," and the girls, upon their arrival in the white kingdom, are met by young men. Love and their newly won beauty defeat blackness. This is clearly a version of the initiation rites of the ancient mysteries. The blackness of the skin symbolizes that of the soul. The soul has to undertake a journey to cleanse itself—one of the innumerable mystic journeys found in literature from antiquity on—and, as befits Neoplatonic philosophy, in the end love and beauty defeat the powers of darkness.[12] It is not suggested that Ben Jonson was a member of a secret society. His masques are clear, humanistic, and earthly. But he was familiar with the ideas and language of mysticism and alchemy; the atmosphere in which he lived was dense with occult sciences.

As early as 1564 John Dee, Queen Elizabeth's astrologer and the object of Ben Jonson's satire, had written a book called *Monas Hieroglyphica*. The Monas is an ancient, abstract astrological sign, consisting of a half circle (the moon) resting on a circle (the sun), with the latter resting on a cross symbolizing the four elements. In the contemplation of this symbol and the possible transpositions of its elements (i.e., its lines and circles), Dee believed that he saw and understood the structure of the entire universe, including the journey of man's soul to God. The advantage of such an abstract hieroglyphic is, in Dee's words, "that its properties can eloquently be explained in every language and nation."[13]

When Marlowe's Dr. Faustus exclaims, "Lines, circles, signs, letters and characters, / O what a world of profit and delight," or when Goethe's Faust says, as he contemplates the sign of the macrocosm, "Ich schau in diesen reinen Zügen / Die wirkende Natur vor meiner Seele liegen," both are looking at a sign, if not identical with, at least similar to Dee's hieroglyphical Monas. What Goethe still understood and expressed in Faust's words is Dee's belief that this sign is itself reality, that all things, worldly and eternal, *are* in those lines and circles—a

[12] It should be noted that the libretto of Mozart's *Magic Flute* is very similar to Ben Jonson's basic story. Based on Masonic initiation rites, it tells the story of the daughter of the Queen of Night, i.e., the soul, who after trials is led to the Temple of Osiris, the Sun, Eternal Wisdom. In the *Magic Flute*, also, the Queen of Night is finally defeated.

[13] Page 3 v.

mystical rather than a magical belief, which accounts for the deep emotion with which Dee speaks of his "great discovery."

During the sixteenth century alchemy underwent an important change. Dee and others still tried to make gold; but the alchemical terms were increasingly used to express a mystical rather than a practical experience—they were considered hieroglyphics for the soul's search and for ultimate union with God. The philosopher's stone *is* Christ, the union of the male and female principles *is* the union of the soul with God, and so on for all alchemical terms and symbols. The use of the occult language of alchemy and the language of the cabala as allegorical languages for the truth of the Christian religion became, in the seventeenth century, as legitimate as the allegorical Christian interpretations of ancient myths had always been.[14]

This trend found its fullest expression in Jacob Boehme's works. Boehme himself did not use the term hieroglyphics, although his thinking might well be characterized as hieroglyphical. Nor did the first Rosicrucian pamphlets, which appeared in 1614 and the years following, use the term, though, like Boehme's works, they are partly couched in alchemical terminology. However, Count Michael Maier, who on his visit to England in 1615 brought with him the knowledge of the Rosicrucians, called his most famous work *Arcana Arcanissima, hoc est Hieroglyphica Aegypto-Graeca.*[15] Maier was an interesting man; he was court physician of Emperor Rudolf II and was knighted by the Emperor. He was not only unusually learned, but also a man of high culture. His books are printed and bound with special care and elegance, with woodcuts of excellent quality. In England he influenced Robert Fludd, the defender, and Thomas Vaughan, the translator, of the Rosicrucian literature. Newton copied many pages from Maier's books. Even as late as the middle of the eighteenth century, a French mystic, Dom Pernety, wrote into his own book many pages from Maier's *Arcana.*[16] And, since Dom Pernety in turn was eagerly read and studied by many romanticists, especially by Gérard de Nerval, Maier, so completely forgotten in the history of literature or ideas, continued to exert a quiet but strong influence.

In his *A Subtle Allegory concerning the Secrets of Alchemy*, Maier writes:

> Are we not all pilgrims here below to that land whither our Savior Christ has gone before? And is not the example of peregrination set us by the swallow, the

[14] What holds true for the literary and artistic categories is equally true for the various occult sciences during the seventeenth century: magic, cabala, alchemy, theosophy, etc. are all used interchangeably and called hieroglyphics.

[15] Oppenheim (or Frankfurt), 1614. The best discussion of Maier is in John Read, *Prelude to Chemistry* (London, 1936).

[16] *Les Fables égyptiennes et grecques dévoilees et réduites au même principe* (Paris, 1758).

herald of spring? by the crane, the stork, and other birds of passage? Does not the whole world lie open before man as the air is everywhere accessible to birds? ... Being surrounded by all these models and examples, it is natural for man to lead the life of a pilgrim. Moreover, it is both pleasant to travel and honorable to be always several hours' journey in advance of the sun.

Except for the earth, he continues, the other elements are all in perpetual motion:

The air sweeps over the earth in the shapes of winds, hurricanes ... fire devours everything before it, water runs along in rivers. But greater still and far more beautiful is the speed of human thought. God alone does not move, for He is everywhere. For all these reasons I conceived that it would be both interesting, pleasant, honorable and eminently profitable for me to follow the example of the whole world and to undertake a pilgrimage for the purpose of discovering the wonderful bird Phoenix.[17]

The pilgrimage is an allegorical one, symbolizing the search of the soul for the one and only truth. Quite clearly, everything in nature is a symbol, a hieroglyphic, which man should understand and whose example he should follow. The four continents correspond to the four elements. Europe corresponds to earth, America to water, Asia to air, and Africa to fire. Since the bird Phoenix loves the sun, i.e., truth, he flies to Egypt where he finds it in the "books of golden medicine," i.e., in the hermetic, specifically the alchemical writings.

The passage shows the intricate and subtle way in which Maier's mind roams through the realms of nature, literature, and religion, connecting and uniting them in his all-pervading hieroglyphical thinking. This way of thinking is even more clearly illustrated in the *Arcana*. The Egyptian "golden medicine," i.e., alchemy in its mystical sense, was taught among the Egyptian philosophers, priests, and kings. It took its symbols from animal life in order to hide its secrets from the vulgar crowd; these symbols were called hieroglyphics by the Greeks. The Greek authors, Orpheus, Hesiod, Homer, and others, learned from the Egyptians to hide the same secrets in their stories. This is the salient point. Once the assumption is made that the Greek legends contained the same hidden wisdom as the hermetic books, Maier can safely walk, in his pilgrimage, through all the Greek legends and interpret them freely as allegories of that same arcane wisdom which Hermes had taught. The vast realm of Greek legends (he discusses, among others, the labors of Hercules and the Trojan War) thus falls into the pattern of hieroglyphical wisdom.[18]

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[17] The original English translation was published in Frankfurt in 1678. It is reprinted in *The Hermetic Museum* (London, 1893), II, 199-223. The quoted passages are on pp. 204 f.

[18] Ben Jonson had expressed precisely the same idea a few years earlier in his *Alchemist* (II, iii, 202 ff.):

"Was not all the knowledge
Of the Egyptians writ in mystik symboles?

One of Maier's prettiest books is called *Atalanta Fugiens, hoc est Emblemata Nova de Secretis naturae chymicae* (Oppenheim, 1618). In this book Maier interpreted the legend of Atalanta allegorically and wrote musical fugues for it (because Atalanta is *fugiens*), which, in turn, are hieroglyphics of her story as well as of the wisdom underlying it.[19] No other writer has so consistently used the allegorical method of interpretation, so consistently seen in everything surrounding him and everything that he read the hieroglyphics of some profound truth, whose last and greatest hieroglyphic was Christ himself.

No one else went quite so far as Maier in explaining the entire world, including the intellectual world as hieroglyphics of the all-pervading God. But it became a commonplace during the seventeenth century to speak of the hieroglyphics of nature, a metaphor closely related to the very common metaphor of the open book of nature.[20] Scientists as well as the mystical philosophers claimed to read the book of nature as a revelation of God parallel with and even anterior to the Bible; the act of creation was the very act by which God himself wrote with his own hand the hieroglyphics of nature into the book of nature.

This thought presupposes a belief, still Neoplatonic in its essence, that the outward appearances of natural things contain some inner meaning, that the essence of each thing can be found by thoughtful contemplation of its outward appearance—in other words, that there exists an essential correspondence between the appearance and the essence of a thing. Thus each individual natural object becomes the hieroglyph of its own essence, and all of nature makes up the hieroglyphical book of nature written by God's own hand. Instead of "hieroglyphic," Paracelsus and Boehme had used the term "signature." Each natural thing carries in its outward appearance the signature of its essence, and all things are a signature of God Himself. But it was only logical to replace the term "signature" by "hieroglyphic," and from Robert Fludd on this is frequently done. Experimental scientists like Kepler, mystically inclined though they were and speaking of the book of nature without hesitation, nevertheless avoided the more mystical term "hieroglyph." Their world was the clearer world of mathematical symbols, and they kept aloof from the mystic world of inexplicable cor-

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Speake not the Scriptures, oft, in Parables,
Are not the choicest fables of the poets
That were the fountains, and first springs of wisdome,
Wrapt in perplexed allegories?"

[19] Read's *Prelude to Chemistry* has an interesting appendix by F. H. Sawyer, "The Music in 'Atalanta Fugiens.'" Sawyer describes Maier's music as "the most rigid and mechanical kind of Canon ever devised."

[20] On the metaphor of the book of nature see, among others, E. R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur and lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern, 1948), pp. 306-327; and Harold Jantz, *Faust as a Renaissance Man* (Princeton, 1951), pp. 76 and 99 f.

respondences. But in what was called natural philosophy, particularly in England, the term is frequently found.

Obviously, the hieroglyphics of nature were no longer Horapollo's enigmatic hieroglyphs. The relative preciseness and intellectuality of his symbolism gave way to a much less clear feeling of the secrets of nature. As the world of enigmatic symbolism disappeared from literature and art, vague hieroglyphs of nature, imprecise and felt rather than intellectually clarified, survived and were taken over by the romantics. The symbolism in which definite animals or plants represent definite ideas was replaced by a much more lively but entirely emotional and subjective feeling for nature as a mysterious revelation of God.

Though Boehme, with all his rich imaginative language, does not use the term hieroglyph, it was soon applied, mainly by his English followers, not only to his imagery but to his entire work. Boehme had not only spoken of the book of nature, but even more poignantly of the language of nature, the "outflown word," as he called it, that original language by which everything in nature breathes out its own essence, a language which Adam understood and according to which he gave each thing its name. Boehme himself often deplored the loss of this original language, the only true language; but his followers, e.g., John Webster and Samuel Pordage,[21] believed that Boehme himself had spoken it and that his obscure, highly metaphorical language actually was the long-lost, universal language of nature, God's hieroglyphical language.

It was only a small step from the idea that Boehme spoke the universal hieroglyphical language to the attempt to transfer this language into visual terms. This was done by the German, Dionysius Andreas Freher,[22] who lived in England toward the end of the seventeenth century. Freher drew diagrams, i.e., complex mystical emblems, in which he recorded Boehme's thought in such a way that, as he believed, people of all languages could immediately understand him. Needless to say, Freher's drawings preserve nothing of Boehme's bold imagination and are not very enlightening. Nevertheless, they were reproduced in William Law's famous eighteenth-century English edition of Boehme's works (1764-81). Freher had called them hieroglyphics—and the term slipped into Law's edition. Freher worked on an assumption similar to that of Dürer, namely that those familiar with the thought the drawings conveyed could read this thought in the drawings as in a book.

From the middle of the seventeenth century on the enigmatic hieroglyphs came under attack for a period of over fifty years. Opposition

[21] John Webster in *Academiarum Examen* (London, 1653), mainly Chap. III, and Samuel Pordage in his religious poem, *Mundorum explicatio, or the Explanation of an hieroglyphical figure* (London, 1661).

[22] The latest study of Freher is by Charles A. Muses, *Illumination on Jacob Böhme: The Work of Dionysius Andreas Freher* (New York, 1951).

came mainly from three sides. The position of natural science is represented by Sir Thomas Browne. In his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica or Enquiries into very many received tenents and commonly presumed truths* (1646), also called *Enquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors,* he goes through the long list of animal fables by Horapollo and many others and proves that they are not based on true observation of nature. It is simply not true, he says, that the bear mother licks her shapeless newborn cub until it has the shape of a little bear. Browne loved the animal fables and did not intend to deprive literature and art of their richly imaginative symbols. He simply attacked them insofar as they claimed to correspond to natural phenomena. But he did not realize that this symbolism, used for over 2,000 years, was based precisely on the belief in the truth of the animal legends, and that it must die when the legends are known to be errors. No one will take the she-bear as a symbol of a "man born deformed, but later taking on a normal shape" (Horapollo, II, 83) if the story of the she-bear is not true. Thus natural science, quite unwittingly, helped to destroy all that symbolism which was founded on the so-called observation of natural phenomena.

The second attack came from a new interest in history. Gradually, a critical attitude toward what might be called the Egyptian myth developed. It went hand in hand with a violently antimystical tendency, first represented in Germany by M. E. D. Colberg's *Platonisch-Hermetisches Christentum* (1690), soon supported by Bishop Warburton's *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* (1738-41). Warburton attacks certain of the historical fallacies from an enlightened rationalistic, strongly antimystical point of view.

The third attack, finally, was an aesthetic attack on the pictorial hieroglyphics. Shaftesbury was its strongest proponent. In his *Plastics*[23] he discusses the various "Characters," dividing emblems into true and false ones. Hieroglyphics fall in the latter category. He calls the hieroglyphics not only "false, barbarous and mixed," but

> preposterous, disproportionable, gouty and lame forms. False imitation, lie, impotence, pretending. Magical, mystical, monkish and Gothic emblems. The Egyptian hieroglyphs are monstrous upon examination, as it appears prima facie to the slightest examiner or novice; however this hieroglyphic may have been extolled by traveling philosophers and admirers of the wonders of Egypt.

Yet, strangely enough, hieroglyphics survived all these attacks. The following example, from Emerson's *Nature* (1836), is only one instance of a widespread use of the term, which is based partly on a still

[23] Published in Benjamin Rand, *Second Characters or the Language of Forms by the Third Earl of Shaftesbury* (Cambridge, 1914). In her *English Emblem Books* (London, 1948), Rosemary Freeman uses Shaftesbury's "Tablature of Hercules" to show how his new concept of the art of painting defeated the older taste for emblems.

lively knowledge of seventeenth-century literature and mysticism, but also represents a transformation of the old term into a peculiarly romantic concept. On the opening page Emerson says:

> Undoubtedly we have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of the creation so far as to believe that whatever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds, the order of things can satisfy. Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those inquiries he would put.

The little poem which Emerson wrote as an introduction to *Nature* has a seventeenth-century ring; the rose speaks, like seventeenth-century hieroglyphics, "all languages," in other words, a universal language understood by all. This is the hieroglyphic which is the solution to Emerson's question: What is nature?

> A subtle chain of countless rings
> The next unto the farthest brings;
> The eye reads omens where it goes,
> And speaks all languages the rose;
> And, striving to be man, the worm
> Mounts through all the spires of form.[24]

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[24] This paper was presented as a public lecture at Yale and Harvard universities under the auspices of the German departments and the Busch-Reisinger Museum. It is concerned particularly with German participation in the problem of hieroglyphics, and passes over most English writers of the seventeenth cenutry and the scholarly works dealing with them.

# ELIOT, BEETHOVEN, AND J. W. N. SULLIVAN

HERBERT HOWARTH

ELIOT, who is fond of detective stories, has planted clues for his biographers in almost every one of his critical articles and lectures. A capital clue to the origins of *Four Quartets* was rescued by the late F. O. Matthiessen from an unpublished lecture given by the poet at New Haven in the winter of 1933. It showed that at that time he was concerned with the idea of writing poetry that would be transparent and thus beyond poetry, and that he had in mind as his model Beethoven's late quartets where the music is beyond music. At a date only a little later than the New Haven statement, Stephen Spender wrote the chapter of *The Destructive Element* in which he compares *Ash Wednesday* with Beethoven's *A Minor Quartet Opus 132.* Stanley Edgar Hyman subsequently pointed out confusions in Spender's study, but suggested that *Four Quartets* clearly asked by their five-movement structure to be correlated with the *A Minor Quartet.*

A comparison between the five movements of the Beethoven masterpiece and the five sections into which each of Eliot's quartets is divided is rewarding. Beethoven's first movement is an allegro; his second a scherzo with a markedly contrasting trio; the third a slow movement of "unearthly beauty," with a contrasting section at a rather quicker, more animated pace; the fourth a very short alla marcia; the fifth an allegro appassionato in rondo design leading to "an extended coda, breathless, brilliant, fully-scored, yet airy." (These quotations are from the H. M. V. program notes available in England in the 1930s.)

In *Burnt Norton,* which appeared in 1936 as the last of the poems dated 1909-1935, Eliot reproduced this formal scheme. In addition he attempted, notably in the first and fifth sections, to find a verbal equivalent for the elusive gusts of the strings by choosing images and rhythms that imply quickness and elusiveness. The allegro of *Burnt Norton* tries to catch music's motion by the use of time and the bird and the echo, the sudden flowering of the lotus, leaves and laughter, and time again. His second section candidly attempts the three-four impetus of a late Beethoven scherzo, and his "trilling wire" image is a grasp at the excited pitch of the music. For the contrasting trio he changes to long lines in his special introspective idiom. By an act of poetic intuition he saw that he could thus adapt Beethoven's contrast to his needs; this was the first of several such acts of intuition which occur in the later quartets and make all four fascinating to the student of poetic form. The slow movement opens like Beethoven's with an exploration, in slow lines, of a place of disaffection; then it proceeds to a second sec-

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tion which does not quicken with new life as Beethoven's does, but instead goes deeper and slower "into the world of perpetual solitude." For Beethoven's alla marcia, Eliot writes a short rhyming lyric, pivoting on two questions and so leading—"attacca subito"—to the last movement which, after discussing the differences between words and music, tentatively answers the questions by saying that "the detail of the pattern is movement" and that love is the cause and the end of movement.

The other quartets retain this scheme; they have the same sections in the same order, and within the sections the equivalent subsections. But there are certain changes. There is a gradual extension of thought through the four quartets. It seems that the thought progresses through the struggle with the form, and that the form is capable of sudden successful modification when the thought moves.

Perhaps I should state here that these notes are not an attempt to interpret the *Four Quartets* (although I hope they may provide material relevant to an interpretation), nor can they take account of the whole range of allusions. They are concerned mainly with Eliot's choice of form—the reasons that influenced it, and the consequences of it. This being said, I would like to face two preliminary questions: Why, of the late Beethoven quartets, did Eliot choose Opus 132 as his model? And why did he retain it for four poems? He might have attempted to write an equivalent for each of the late Beethoven quartets in turn, and it is possible to imagine that in 1933 he played with that idea; but in the end he preferred to labor at Opus 132, marvelously exploiting its resources.

My supposition is that Eliot's attention was compelled to the *A Minor Quartet* by the description which Beethoven wrote above the slow movement: "Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit . . . " On the occasion of the Braille Centenary Eliot gave, as an act of generosity, an informal talk before a small audience at the National Book League in London. A blind reader recited from *The Rock*. Eliot commented that for two or three years preceding the composition of that pageant he had gone through a barren and difficult period; there had been moments when he doubted whether he had any more poetry to write. The London churches then asked him to undertake *The Rock* and he responded, composing the choruses by an act of the will. The result was (I *think* he meant after that work, not in it) a release of his blocked poetical powers. In fact we know that a rich phase opened after *The Rock*; the second half of his creative life opened and yielded all his full-length plays and the *Quartets*.

Eliot did not touch in that talk on the sources of his new creative power. Personally I feel, as Matthiessen evidently felt, that his return to America after eighteen years' absence had radical effects; perhaps

the metaphorical family reunion that began with the Harvard lectures of 1932-33 played a double role in the crisis and the emergence from crisis, first completing the dislocation of his forces, then providing the sustenance out of which they were to be reorganized. The consideration of that process is not the purpose of these notes. In relation to the form of *Four Quartets* the point is that Eliot felt from 1933, or a little later, that he had passed through severe difficulties, through a state like illness, that demanded a confrontation with himself at the profoundest level, and desired to write poetry that recorded and examined and offered an understanding of the experience. Such poetry would be his sacred song of thanks to the Godhead for recovery. As he reflected on Beethoven's final style, to which he had been drawn by the theory that an artistic medium ultimately becomes transparent in the hands of a master, Eliot realized that he must attempt that transparency on the model of the *A Minor Quartet*, for that was also the highest example of a hymn of thanks for safe passage through the dark. If he wrote to that pattern, the form would show that he was writing a sacred song.

*Burnt Norton* was only a half success. Eliot diminished the impact of the poem by the procedure which he hoped would convey the aural effect of music, the dependence on rhythms and imagery meant to suggest the *elusive*. The scherzo-lyric of the second section is in its way a triumph of equivalence for the Beethoven scherzo, but even that is too insubstantial to be the most satisfactory poetry. The opening movement is much too elusive; and so is the close of the last, though the twenty-two lines that begin "Words move, music moves" overcome the difficulties and take on force as they report the poet's experience with words. How does he succeed with the central and formally most significant slow movement? He writes a convincing personal waste-land version of the state of illness with which Beethoven is initially concerned, but he does not go on to attempt a version of the contrasting section which the composer marked "Neue Kraft fuehlend." I would guess that the reason for this omission is that in 1935, even though beginning to use his new strength, he did not yet feel sufficiently sure of it to dare to speak of it or write as its interpreter; possibly he was not yet wholly, not umbilically, detached from the state of illness.

There is no more exacting critic of his own work than Eliot, and he knew that while he had written a poem fine enough to print he had not solved his problems. That is why he returned to the same pattern, determined to solve them. The success of the renewed experiments can be gauged according to his success in writing the "Neue Kraft fuehlend" section. In *East Coker* there is the first trace of new power realized. Though he tells himself

> I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
> For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
> For love would be love of the wrong thing...

there is already a trace of the hope and the love in the animating lift of the lines. In *The Dry Salvages* he alters the form of the slow movement because the story of the journey into illness has changed into a study of the transatlantic journey which itself is a symbol of the journey of the soul through life and death; the division into contrasting sections has to be let go in favor of this thematic requirement. In the last quartet, *Little Gidding*, the first section has ceased to be a brooding on illness and has become a statement of adaptation to life; Eliot is sure of himself now, completely confident; and the second section is a full realization of Beethoven's animated andante section, beginning with a promise of such transfiguring that

> All shall be well, and
> All manner of thing shall be well...

Perhaps the closest formal reproduction of Beethoven's pattern is in *East Coker*. The first, second, and fifth sections follow the procedure set in *Burnt Norton*, but do it better with a firmer hold. The third section, as we have seen, does not completely represent Beethoven's slow movement, but it does feel in that direction and closes with the famous mystical statement of the contraries which are the key to health. This in turn suggests a function for the alla marcia passage, which in *Burnt Norton* had been only an interposed question; Eliot now makes it a metaphysical lyric imaging the world in terms of sickness, a sickness which can be understood by analogy with the function of an individual's sickness in the Jungian psychology, as the opportunity for salvation.

Five years elapsed between *Burnt Norton* and *East Coker*. It took Eliot that long to advance in his control of the pattern. Then, having controlled it, he was able in the next two quartets to use it with an appearance of superb ease, and to pass to virtuoso modifications of it, which result in work of great technical beauty. In *The Dry Salvages* he drops his trilling-wire scherzo, because it has been leading him into "worn-out" periphrasis, and replaces it with the quasi sestina. To this piece of writing he probably looks with satisfaction when he applies to himself one of his favorite tests: "Have I in any way made useful technical innovations?" Through the six stanzas the six lines rhyme in unchanging order, and the rhyme words are sometimes new and always as if dictated by the sense, so that they become an undertow giving the depth and sea rhythm to the poem that it needs to state its meaning. It is an improvement on the previous scherzi, and it leaves them and the Beethoven shape behind, but it is only possible because

these have been the stepping-stones to it. The earlier management of the trio through long probing introspective lines still operates. In *Little Gidding,* however, Eliot reverses the plan: once more he writes a rhymed lyric to open the section, only now he has squeezed the periphrasis out of it, or at any rate has substituted his own kind of periphrasis for the outworn kind; but for the trio he suddenly builds, by a compelled passionate insight, a tense new formal structure.

Using Canto XV of the *Inferno* as a frame of reference, he describes a meeting with a "compound ghost" (inclusive of Mallarmé, Babbitt, Pound, Whitman, Owen, and his younger self). This ancestor meets him in the empty streets of blitzed London—a land consumed by fire. For Brunetto Latini's foretelling of Dante's future he substitutes a prophecy of Eliot's success, which, inseparable from misunderstanding and approval for the wrong reasons, must be the profoundest source of dissatisfaction to the poet. For this episode Eliot writes lines that look as if they are Dante's terza rima, but in fact they do not rhyme; they are held together by interlocking masculine and feminine endings. This form lends them a higher austerity than the usual imitations of Dante's terza rima can give. It has a dignity outstanding even amid Eliot's dignified poetry; it has an awful dignity, and at the end a bitter dignity (which is actually out of keeping with the reconciliation towards which the *Quartets* are by this stage quickly moving—but nonetheless the lines are supreme). Now if we consider this section in relation to the "trio" of the three preceding quartets, we see, as before, that the astonishingly triumphant development has been made possible by the struggle to meet the demands of the section quartet by quartet; the preceding attempts are the basis from which this makes its upward spring.

The gradual evolving and modifying of the five-movement pattern was a process spread over seven years. Helen Gardner has written that the four quartets were conceived from the outset as a unity. I have never been able to satisfy myself that this was the case. The Faber catalogue which eventually announced the gathering of all four together for the autumn of 1944 certainly says that "The author . . . has always intended them to be published as one volume, and to be judged as a single work." But in 1940 the autumn catalogue which had announced *East Coker* had shown the author as a little less definite in intention: "This is a poem of the same length and in the same form—described by the author as a 'quartet'—as *Burnt Norton.* These two poems, and at least one yet unwritten, are intended to form a kind of sequence." What this blurb fixes is that Eliot was determined, by the time *East Coker* was finished, to persist in the *A Minor* pattern, proper to his theme and proving so challenging technically, and to continue, with the help of it, to explore his quadrilateral of themes: the theme of illness and its values

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and the nature of healing; the theme of exploration itself, and of migration, expatriation, and repatriation; the theme of history, arising alike from the study of society's illness and of exploration, and made urgent in *Little Gidding* by the circumstances of the war; and the theme of the artist's struggle with his medium. The last theme is a curious consequence of the struggle to emulate Beethoven. At the beginning of the fifth section of *Burnt Norton*, he had reflected on the difficulties and opportunities of that struggle, contrasting the potentialities of words and music. Thus, as he treated a related problem in the same place in each quartet, he made a series of disquisitions on the mastery of the medium a leading feature of his experiment in mastering the medium.

To master the medium and make it transparent was not an aim of Eliot alone. Among his English friends in Bloomsbury, Roger Fry had long spoken of it. Fry had praised Derain for outsoaring his medium so that the painting was forgotten in the immediacy of the result. Eliot, so closely associated with Bloomsbury, must have been aware of Fry's dicta and perhaps impressed by them. But it is not surprising that, when he consciously formulated his attempt at poetry beyond the medium, he did so in emulation of a musical precedent rather than a precedent from painting. There is imagery from the visual arts in his poems, but it is, I think, slight compared with his references to music. In his earliest verse he wrote preludes and rhapsodies. He alluded to ariettes. He satirized the Chopin cult. In *The Waste Land* he used Wagner as his frame of reference (like so many other writers of the time), leading through a verse from *Tristan*, an imitation of the Rhinemaidens, and evocations of *Parsifal*, to a conflagratory collapse of London recalling *The Dusk of the Gods*. From passages in his prose we know that in his early London days he was an enthusiast for Stravinsky, whose music he defended against skeptical friends at the point of an umbrella. He was a connoisseur of the ballet. When he launched *The Criterion*, he very early appointed J. B. Trend his music critic, and issue by issue Trend contributed papers which make the files of that defunct periodical still valuable reading for the musical amateur. Probably his musical knowledge, at once many-sided and discriminating, was a gift of St. Louis. Dreiser, who arrived in the city in 1892 when Eliot was four years old, has described it as confident and exacting in its musical culture.

I don't know whether or not Eliot usually read books on music and musicians. But there is evidence, external and internal, that he was acquainted with a study of Beethoven which appeared in London in 1927, *Beethoven—His Spiritual Development*, by J. W. N. Sullivan. Sullivan was a largely self-educated Londoner of considerable capacity and passionate convictions. He had been encouraged in his literary work by Middleton Murry, who had linked him with Eliot, Conrad

Aiken, Aldous Huxley, and others in his band of brilliant contributors to *The Athenaeum* between 1919 and 1921. In *Ushant* Aiken has told how he was present at a four-cornered luncheon in the early 1920s with Huxley, Sullivan, and Eliot. When J. B. Trend wrote in *The Criterion* for March 1928 on appropriate and inappropriate literary approaches to music, he singled out Sullivan's *Beethoven* as one of the few recent instances of a really useful study. Eliot was an editor who conscientiously read all the contributions to his periodical; the periodical and his own writings alike show, again and again, the impact of previous contributions on his thought; to analyze *The Criterion* is to be impressed by the dynamic developments that can occur when a poet-editor takes his editorial duties seriously. I believe that either Eliot had looked through Sullivan's book already, out of an interest in both the man and his subject, and was confirmed in a positive response to it by Trend's remarks; or that Trend's remarks sent him to the book. It is striking that, when Spender writes about Eliot and Beethoven in *The Destructive Element*, he quotes from Sullivan to characterize the late music. I am inclined to speculate that Eliot himself had mentioned Sullivan to Spender. Perhaps at a *Criterion* lunch or a Bloomsbury-set encounter Eliot told Spender that he was desirous of creating poetry of the late-Beethoven transparency and referred him to Sullivan's work of interpretation. Whereupon Spender, wrongly thinking that Eliot had already attempted an equivalent to Beethoven, sat down and read Sullivan and forcibly correlated what he found with *Ash Wednesday*.

Eliot was actually describing something still fermenting. He was turning over and over in his mind the story of Beethoven's last period as Sullivan told it. Some of Sullivan's phrases can be heard in *Four Quartets*. Here is a list:

(1) Sullivan quotes from Beethoven's journal: "Submission, absolute submission to your fate... O hard struggle! Turn everything which remains to be done to planning the long journey." This spiritual journey of Beethoven gives Eliot one of his themes—which he pursues both in the terminology of a journey into the dark and through a study of his ancestors' journey to America and his own journey back to Europe, which become symbols of the inner migration. Eliot thinks of Beethoven's "submission," which made the journey possible for the composer, in the lines in *East Coker*:

> ...what there is to conquer
> By strength and submission, has already been discovered
> Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
> To emulate...

(2) Three times Sullivan refers to "Beethoven the explorer." In the last section of *East Coker* Eliot says "Old men ought to be ex-

plorers." We can read this line as an endorsement and extension of Sullivan's words, and inflect it "Old men *ought* to be explorers."

(3) Sullivan has a quick, poignant discussion of Beethoven's intense but mishandled affection for his nephew. Eliot writes:

> Do not let me hear
> Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly...

(4) The *East Coker* lyric imaging Christ as the wounded surgeon may have grown from reflections on the letter written by Beethoven's physician, quoted by Sullivan, pp. 257-258: "... when I promised him alleviation of his suffering with the coming of the vitalizing weather of spring he answered with a smile, 'My day's work is finished. If there were a physician could help me his name should be called Wonderful.' This pathetic allusion to Handel's 'Messiah' touched me deeply..."

(5) Sullivan tells how Beethoven finished the Bb quartet Opus 135 at Gneixendorf: " 'the name sounds like the breaking of an axle-tree,' said Beethoven." The memory of this vivid simile filtered into the *Burnt Norton* scherzo:

> Garlic and sapphires in the mud
> Clot the bedded axle-tree.

Matthiessen, at the suggestion of John L. Sweeney, related these lines to Mallarmé's "tonnerre et rubis aux moyeux," but was not, I think, able to show their relevance to the poem. If we hear the verse as a late Beethoven scherzo, and realize that the axle-tree that is breaking is Beethoven's mind, and that accordingly it carries suggestions of the danger to the mind of the artist exploring a frontier, then it takes on significance. Also, the point of the borrowing from Mallarmé, with which the image is fused, grows clear; it is a borrowing from "M'introduire dans ton histoire," and what Eliot is doing is making a montage, superimposing himself on Beethoven's history, as he is fully aware.

(6) The first movement ends, says Sullivan, "as only Beethoven would end with what sounds like a startling and celestial trumpet call." Eliot does not attempt to equal this effect in *Burnt Norton*, but in *East Coker* there is a hint of it, and in *The Dry Salvages* he superbly transposes it with

> Clangs
> The bell.

Professor Grover Smith has surmised, in his recent book on Eliot, that the triple "Resign" in *Coriolan* may be a reminiscence of the heartbeat figure in Beethoven's Coriolan overture.[1] If that is so, Eliot had

[1] Throughout this paper I am writing without comment on the difficult question of analogies between musical and poetic idiom. This much is clear, however: that

already experimented with equivalents for the kind of dramatic musical stroke that he now in *The Dry Salvages* is able to incorporate perfectly into his own material. His incomplete *Coriolan* might be analyzed as a first encounter with Beethoven.

(7) Sullivan tells how Beethoven copies "mystical sentences from eastern literature." Eliot also is fond of Eastern mystical literature; he might in any case have written his passage on Krishna and Arjuna in *The Dry Salvages*, but it is just possible that his natural tendency was prompted and sanctioned by Sullivan's reference.

(8) Eliot's theme of illness and suffering and sterile hiatus in creation is of course implicit in the whole Beethoven biography. But there is one passage that sounds particularly relevant. Writing of the *Große Fuge* "in which the apparently opposing elements of life are seen as necessary and no longer in opposition," Sullivan goes on: "Beethoven had come to realize that his creative energy, which he at one time opposed to his destiny, in reality owed its very life to that destiny. It is not merely that he believed that the price was worth paying; he came to see it as necessary that a price should be paid. To be willing to suffer in order to create is one thing; to realize that one's creation necessitates one's suffering, that suffering is one of the greatest of God's gifts, is almost to reach a mystical solution of the problem of evil . . ." From this point Eliot starts his own exploration of illness and suffering; in the course of it he makes his own mystical reconciliation of opposites; and in the closing lines of the whole sequence he offers

> A condition of complete simplicity
> (Costing not less than everything) . . .

(9) There is one further connection of considerable thematic importance. Sullivan describes Beethoven's special lack of the "language mentality": "It is not only that he was untrained and clumsy in the use of language; his most important states of consciousness, what he would have called his 'thoughts,' were not of the kind that can be expressed in language." Perhaps this prompts Eliot's inquiry, pressed through each of the quartets, into the difference between words and music, the precarious availability of words for the expression of difficult thoughts, the poet's struggle "trying to learn to use words."

Did Eliot succeed in writing poetry beyond poetry? Not in *Four Quartets*. He wrote a searching, moving sequence on the subject of trying to do so. Sometimes there are lines and even passages of several lines that make statements so intently and effectively that they are

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the exceptional, dramatic strokes in music—which are already, in a sense, non-musical, are easier for a poet to equate than music's normal effects, which depend so much on flow and interflow. A poet can more easily write, and a reader can more easily pick up, equivalents for the strikingly exceptional.

almost beyond poetry, but then the voice alters—yielding poetry that is often outstandingly beautiful but that is, for that reason, not what Eliot was seeking. Instances of this evident poetry are "The salt is on the briar rose," and the celebrated image of the train halted in the subway tunnel, or

> Out at sea the dawn wind
> Wrinkles and slides.

But though the *Quartets* did not produce the result for which Eliot was working, they showed him, in the contest with the material, more about the result than he had known before. He was then able to proceed to it in *The Cocktail Party* and *The Confidential Clerk*.

He had told himself that the result was necessary in the highest interests of writing at the supreme level where truth burns away ornament. But the impulsion to it was finally provided by a strictly practical need. For thirty years he had been speculating on how to make poetry which would cross the boards of the theater and be received without prejudice by the large, regular theater audience. He had worked for the style of *Four Quartets* with incomplete success; but writing for the stage afterwards, and challenging himself to find a style not so much beyond poetry as beyond prejudice, he found himself capable of something new. Exercised by Beethoven and Sullivan, he was sufficiently master of words to obtain the half-colloquial rhythms, the natural idiom and accentuations, and the distillation of flavor and feeling from them, that carry the late popular plays.

The final dramatic style is certainly transparent. Perhaps one could quibble at the description of it as "beyond poetry." It is not supra-poetry. Detractors might call it infra-poetry. It is really para-poetry. That means, it is on the same level as what is commonly called in our tradition poetry, but apart from it, and kept distinct from it to avoid confusion.

Towards the end of *The Cocktail Party* there is a moment when Eliot invites us to see the proof of his success. Harcourt-Reilly asks: "Do you mind if I quote poetry?" Edward and Lavinia are polite enough, and cowed enough, to encourage him, and he quotes—since Eliot, whose reading of poetry began, after Omar, with Shelley, is returning to Shelley at the last—a magnificent archetypal passage from *Prometheus Unbound*. It is a crucial moment of the play and completely serious, and thus Shelley is apt for it; but I fancy that the humorist in Eliot is also active in the formulation of it, and so is the technical critic. For he wants us to note that traditional poetry sounds unmistakably different from the new poetry, the transparent medium, that he has invented after a lifetime of discipline.

The surprise in the result is that, while Beethoven's journey took him beyond the common ear, Eliot's immersion of himself in Beethoven

and his struggle to emulate Beethoven ultimately produced poetry to which the common ear has opened. Eliot probably regards this as right. Though he is the most aloof of men, his inner self is fired by sociorеligious convictions, and such convictions require the mending of the channels of communication between the poet and the public. It is part of the characteristic Eliot paradox that he took the most private way in company with the most individual genius to this collective end. And, if the end differentiates him from the musical ancestor, Beethoven, it also separates him from a literary forebear, Mallarmé. Mallarmé honored the word, but Eliot, while respecting Mallarmé so much, honors what the word signifies, and is intent that the word be forgotten in favor of its significance.

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# VERGA AND D. H. LAWRENCE'S TRANSLATIONS

GIOVANNI CECCHETTI

D. H. LAWRENCE spent many years of his restless life in Italy, where he hoped to find some of the sound spontaneity of natural instincts for which he was anxiously looking.[1] He first visited the peninsula in 1912 and 1913, traveling in the regions of Trento and Lake Garda and writing the volume that bears the romantic title, *Twilight in Italy*. Soon after World War I he went to Naples and Capri, and even farther south; in 1920 he settled in Taormina and in the following winter took a trip to Sardinia, where he jotted down the notes that became *Sea and Sardinia*. That spring he left Sicily but returned early in the fall. This latter Sicilian period, as it may be called, which begins in September 1921, was for Lawrence the time of his discovery of Verga.

In those years, as never before, the attention of the Italian reading public was focused on Verga. His works were at last receiving the praise and recognition they deserved, and he was acclaimed as one of the great European novelists of the nineteenth century. A long and excellent essay by Luigi Russo, published at the end of 1919[2] on the eve of Verga's eightieth birthday, had moved the still waters and brought into a new perspective a writer who seemed to have been almost forgotten. The literary critics of Italy became immediately involved in discussions and polemics; Verga's books were reprinted many times, and La Voce[3]—then surviving only as a publishing house—asked him for a final, authorized edition of *Novelle rusticane*,[4] thus leading to that

[1] A shorter version of this paper was presented, in Italian, at the Modern Language Association meeting in Chicago in Dec. 1955.

[2] *Giovanni Verga* (Naples, 1919). This book has been reprinted many times with substantial revisions and additions. The latest edition was issued in 1947. It remains a fundamental work for the study of Verga.

[3] *La Voce* had been a little magazine of great importance. Founded and edited in Florence by Giuseppe Prezzolini, it was published from 1908 to 1916 (from 1914 to 1916 Giuseppe De Robertis took Prezzolini's place as the editor). *La Voce* molded a generation of Italian intellectuals and left its mark on twentieth-century literature. All the major critics and writers of the time—such as B. Croce, E. Cecchi, G. Papini, A. Palazzeschi, and many foreign authors—considered it an open forum where they could debate the most pressing artistic, literary, and philosophical problems. Along with the magazine, Prezzolini founded a publishing house with the same name. He revived the publishing house after World War I.

[4] After the first edition (1883), *Novelle rusticane*, not protected by a copyright, was frequently reprinted for several decades by provincial publishers (L. Russo, *op. cit.*, 1947 ed., p. 225). For Prezzolini, Verga corrected the book thoroughly, changing many of the original expressions in order to make them "more Italian" and sometimes even altering the narrative sequences. After the publication of the book, he expressed his dissatisfaction in a letter to Luigi Russo, dated Oct. 15, 1920, saying that the new revised edition was "zeppa d'errori" (crammed with

unhappy revision which the old novelist prepared in 1920, with his mind too far removed from the world and the people he had created. Lawrence, towards the end of 1921, had Verga's works in his hands and read them.

He was conquered at once: "I have only been reading Giovanni Verga lately," he wrote to Catherine Carswell on October 21; "he exercises quite a fascination on me . . ."[5] And a few days later to Edward Garnett: "Verga is extraordinarily good—peasant—quite modern—Homeric."[6] Lawrence apparently thought he had encountered a kindred spirit, an author who could grasp and bring to light an elemental and primitive humanity with all the vehemence of its instinctive life. This may be why he called Verga "modern" and at the same time "Homeric." His adjective "Homeric" does not repeat the definition, now become famous, that Luigi Capuana gave of Verga's style just after the publication of *I Malavoglia*, but springs both from personal admiration and from the context of the letter, in which there are other references to the poems of Homer.

He decided immediately to translate the author he had discovered. In that same letter to Edward Garnett, he asked if there were any English editions of Verga's major works. This inquiry was not made with the idea of consulting any previous translations, but only to make sure that he could have his own published without having to face too many obstacles.[7]

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mistakes) (G. Verga, *Opere*, Milan-Naples, 1955, p. 947; L. Russo, *op. cit.*, 1947, p. 458). The critics have rejected this new version in favor of the old text, which is far better. The La Voce edition has never been reprinted. There is no indication that D. H. Lawrence knew of its existence; it was fortunate that he read and translated the 1883 text.

[5] *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Aldous Huxley (London, 1932), p. 534.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 535.

[7] There is no evidence that Lawrence ever knew that some selections of Verga's short stories had previously appeared in English. He knew that there was a translation of *I Malavoglia* (*The House by the Medlar Tree*, New York, 1890; London, 1893) and one of *Mastro Don Gesualdo* (London, 1893), both by Mary Craig (see *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 545), although he had not seen them; but he never mentions existing versions of the shorter works. During the last decade of the nineteenth century two collections of Verga's stories were published in English: (1) *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Tales of Sicilian Life*, translated by Alma Strattel (London, 1893), including "Cavalleria Rusticana," "Red-Headed Malpelo," "Gramigna's Mistress," "The Mystery," "Nedda," and "War between Saints"; (2) *Under the Shadow of Etna: Sicilian Stories from the Italian of Giovanni Verga*, by Nathan H. Dole (Boston, 1896), including "How Peppa Loved Gramigna," "Jeli, the Shepherd," "Rustic Chivalry," "La Lupa," "The Story of Saint Joseph's Ass," and "The Bereaved" ("Gli Orfani"); this book was reprinted with the title *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Sicilian Stories* (Boston, 1898). The two collections contain a total of ten stories, nine of which are among the twenty-one translated by Lawrence. Another translation of "Cavalleria Rusticana," by F. T. Cooper, was published in the first decade of this century (*Short Story Classics* [foreign], Vol. II, ed. by W. Patten, New York, 1907), and was reprinted much later in *Atlantica*, XII (Mar. 1932).

Apparently Lawrence was aware of the magnitude of the task that he wished to undertake; but this realization, far from discouraging him, made him look at his author as a challenge and at himself as the only person in the English-speaking world capable of accomplishing the task successfully. "He would be most difficult to translate. That is what tempts me: though it is rather a waste of time, and probably I shall never do it. Though if I don't, I doubt if anyone else will—adequately at least."[8]

The first days of January 1922 found Lawrence hard at work. He translated with unbelievable speed. Toward the end of the month he wrote to his agent in London that he had already done half of *Mastro Don Gesualdo*,[9] and in March he completed his version of the novel in Ceylon, where he had gone a month before.[10] In April and during the first part of May, while he was traveling in Asia and in Australia, he translated *Novelle rusticane*. Then he turned once again to his own novels and did not finish his translation of *Vita dei campi* until much later.

These chronological data help to explain some of the dissatisfaction felt by many who have read Lawrence's translations. He worked very hurriedly, without giving his versions the time they demanded. They are the enthusiastic work of a man of genius, who did not, or could not, go beyond a first draft. There is no doubt that they would have had great beauty and might even have become works of art in their own right—as is sometimes the case with translations—if they had been carefully corrected and polished.

The remarks that I present here are based only on the versions of *Novelle rusticane* (which in English bears the title *Little Novels of Sicily*[11]) and of *Vita dei campi* (for which Lawrence adopted the second title Verga gave to this book, *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories*[12]). *Mastro Don Gesualdo*[13] is not examined, since the short stories provide enough material for observations on Lawrence's work as a translator.

One of the main problems that every translator must solve is the problem of language—and by language I mean the weight or the function that each word or expression has in the original and, therefore, must have in the new medium. An author always speaks a personal

[8] *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 535.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 542.

[10] E. W. Tedlock, Jr., *The Frieda Lawrence Collection of D. H. Lawrence Manuscripts. A Descriptive Bibliography* (Albuquerque, 1948), p. 269.

[11] Published by T. Seltzer (Boston, 1925). The *Little Novels of Sicily* were re-issued in 1953 by the Grove Press (New York) from the original Seltzer plates.

[12] Published by the Dial Press (New York, 1928).

[13] Published by T. Seltzer (Boston, 1923), and re-issued by the Grove Press in 1955 from the Seltzer plates.

language, and a translator must be able to reproduce it as exactly and as forcefully as possible.

When Verga abandoned the themes and style of the sentimental novels of his early period to turn to the life of the poor and somewhat elemental, but profoundly human, people of Sicily, he adopted a language that was bare and essential, devoid of all the sensuous ornaments that had previously marked his writings. He rejected the old and new "literary" ways of expression and resorted to a stylistic technique which, in his opinion, enabled him to reproduce the speech of his people with an almost absolute directness. His syntax acquired an extremely simple appearance; his sentences became sequences of coordinate clauses connected by "e" or "che" (frequently a transcription of the Sicilian "ca"), and sometimes became long and rambling. His vocabulary became very popular and so scant that it may be considered one of the most limited in all Italian literature. And he introduced into the stream of his narrative the indirect speech of his characters and of an invisible chorus of villagers commenting on the action, so that the novel or the story should "seem to have made itself."[14]

A translator must make an untiring effort to render as many characteristics of the original as his own language allows. The reader of a classic in translation should feel all the power of style that is felt by the reader of the original. In the case of Verga, his prose should have in English all the freshness, the power, the nuances, and the suggestive meanings that it has in Italian. Both its syntax and its linguistic features should be rendered with the greatest precision possible. And if the author—borrowing the musical technique of the leitmotif, which has a parallel in popular speech—characterizes a person or a thing with an image that he repeats each time he mentions that person or thing, the translator must follow the same pattern. This, and only this, is to translate in the real sense of the word—to transfer into another language both the spirit and the letter of the original; these two integral elements cannot be separated without destroying the unity created by their fusion.

Naturally, not all authors can be translated by the same method. In the case of Verga, a literal translation is doubtless the best, because it helps greatly to preserve the peculiarities of his texts. Italian critics have said for a long time that translations are like wives: if beautiful they are unfaithful, if faithful they are ugly. But with translations, as with wives, there are exceptions; sometimes, though not too often, they can be both beautiful and faithful, if by faithfulness one understands a profound penetration of each word or image coupled with the effort and the ability to reproduce it exactly in the new medium, without altering its meaning or its scope.

[14] From the introduction to "L'amante di Gramigna."

When Lawrence decided to translate Verga, he did not have a moment of hesitation concerning the method he would follow. Neither in his letters nor in the biographical writings of his closest friends is there any indication that he might even have considered the problem seriously. The only evidence we find relates to his eagerness to undertake the task and the amazing speed with which he completed it. He let himself be guided exclusively by his personal instinct and artistic taste.

The absence of a critical approach caused him to make some errors that could easily have been avoided. In the letter to Edward Garnett quoted above, he asserts that in order to translate Verga one should master English "in the dialect." This is the only allusion made by Lawrence to what the Sicilian writer might require of a translator, and it shows that he felt the regional linguistic stratum lying just beneath the surface of Verga's prose. However, he did not explain how the "dialect" should be used. Very probably he meant to employ it directly. In parts of the dialogue of "Cavalleria rusticana" and of some other stories (but very inconsistently), he drew from the cockney of London; and there he was in error, because Turiddu, Alfio, Lola, and Santa speak Italian, except for two instances when they speak straight Sicilian. It is true that their Italian is flavored with local color, that sometimes it sounds translated--and indeed it is—but nevertheless it is Italian.

Usually Lawrence translated word for word, adhering more closely to the letter of the text than was wise. Following the original as closely as possible, he translated also Verga's images and idioms, often creating new and very uncommon images in English and achieving the color that British and American reviewers noted in his versions. To create new and uncommon images is the privilege of writers, and the duty of translators when the images are new in the original. However, though aesthetically Verga's images are always new, for they reflect a truly original imagination in their freshness and intensity, linguistically they are not.

Lawrence relied far too much on the dictionary. The pages of Verga's books in his library bear many English equivalents handwritten just above the corresponding Italian words,[15] and clearly taken from the dictionary. He probably looked up many words he did not know, when he was reading those books for the first time or while he was doing some preparatory work for the translation, and later made use of his findings without critically examining their fitness. For example, when, in "Rosso Malpelo," Verag says "scolparsi" (to clear oneself), he uses a very common word and in the more popular form (the less popular form is "discolparsi"); Lawrence, however, takes the English equiva-

[15] This information was kindly provided by Professor Mark Schorer, who has examined D. H. Lawrence's personal library.

lent with the same Latin root, which comes to his mind first—it is also the one to be found in the dictionary—and writes "to exculpate oneself," anything but a popular and daily expression. This is not to translate literally, but to misunderstand a text.

A translator must have a complete mastery of the linguistic world of his author; this is an elementary requirement. One of Lawrence's main shortcomings was his inadequate knowledge of Italian; and, unfortunately for his translations, Verga's texts present more difficulties than those of most other Italian writers. Lawrence learned Italian through direct contacts with the Italian people, without ever studying it systematically. When he began to work on his translations he had been in Italy a relatively short time, and almost entirely in regions where a large variety of dialects are spoken. Even many years later, after a long period of residence in Tuscany—the only part of the country where the language is spoken correctly by nearly everyone—he wrote some letters in Italian[16] which betray a rather vague notion of the language he is using; he is actually thinking and writing in English, and his grammar, vocabulary, and spelling are poor.

In Lawrence's versions one often meets with strident and inconsistent statements and notations; his reader might believe that Verga was careless, did not give much thought to narrative details, and even contradicted himself. In other instances, a key word or a sentence is rendered erroneously, and as a result the artistic impact of a whole section of a story is lost. The following example illustrates both of these types of errors.

In "La Lupa"[17] there is a Sicilian proverb that Verga himself translated into very stilted Italian: "in quell'ora fra vespero e nona, in cui non ne va in volta femmina buona . . . " (in equally stilted English: "in those hours between vespers and nones when no good woman goes roving about . . . "). It is a fundamental expression, which occurs three times with almost no variation, and supports the central section of the story. It refers to the early afternoon, when the Sicilian countryside lies motionless under a ruthless sun and nobody would dare walk on the roads. Those hours are traditionally believed to be under the spell of malignant spirits.

Lawrence translates: "between vesper bell and night bell's sound," i.e., between the late afternoon and the darkness of night. Evidently, for "nona" (nones) he understood "nove" (nine o'clock). And yet in the same sentence we find the burning stones of the pathways, the scorched stubble of the immense fields, and the sky heavy on the horizon

[16] *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, pp. 762, 805-807.

[17] Lawrence's translation of "La Lupa" (The She-Wolf) was recently reprinted in Marc Slonim's anthology, *Modern Italian Short Stories* (New York, 1954). In this book, as in Lawrence, the story bears the Italian title.

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towards misty Etna; Lawrence even adds the word "afternoon": "in the afternoon heat." How he could reconcile this afternoon heat with the night is a mystery.

Apparently he not only failed to understand the word "nona," but had not grasped the story well enough to sense the import of some key images. The She-wolf constantly walks, breathes, and pants under a parching sun, while an irresistible passion for Nanni, her son-in-law, devours her. The flame burning the motionless countryside is both the symbol and the counterpart of the inner and more violent fire consuming her. The proverb, appearing just before she tempts him, and repeated by the desperate Nanni immediately after the sin, contain the core of the story and further suggests the fatal inescapability of the flesh, by which Nanni is so overpowered that he has no way to free himself except by killing the She-wolf, with his axe glowing in the sun.

An unfortunate error occurs at the end of "Cavalleria rusticana." As he stabs Turiddu for the third time, Alfio shouts: "ora tua madre lascerà stare le galline" (now your mother will leave the chickens alone); but Lawrence has him say: "now your mother can mind her fowls," which is precisely the opposite and sharply contradicts what we have read a few paragraphs before.

At the beginning of "Cavalleria rusticana" Lawrence is guilty of a dislocation of images that considerably affects the rest of the story. Verga writes that Turiddu's *bersagliere* cap looked like a fortune-teller's. This image is a suggestive detail susceptible of a deeply poetic development; further on, in fact, we learn that the very tassel of that cap "had tickled" Santa's heart and "was forever dancing before her eyes." But Lawrence makes the whole Turiddu look like a fortune-teller, drawing the reader's attention away from the cap.

A similar alteration appears in the first part of "Black Bread." Verga states: "la mamma poi, vecchia e malaticcia, non si sapeva a chi toccasse mantenerla" (then there was the mother, old and sickly, and nobody knew who was to support her). Lawrence translates: "then the mother, who was old and ailing, didn't know whose business it was to keep her." This inverts the situation and stands in conflict with the character of the mother; she is always passive, "si lasciava fare" (let them do with her what they liked), and everything concerning her is her children's problem. Perhaps Lawrence thought that "non si sapeva" was the same as "non sapeva." The opposite misinterpretation also occurs in "Black Bread." In the phrase, "se si dovesse tornare a far quel che abbiamo fatto" (if we were to do it all over again), the idiomatic impersonal "si dovesse" replaces the first person plural "dovessimo." Lawrence rendered it as a true impersonal, "if folks ought to do as we have done," which is an altogether different thing.

In many cases he mistranslates only one word in a sentence, but this

may be enough to disrupt the logical continuity of a story. In "Black Bread," the frog catcher, Pino the Tome, walks along the alleys of his village "colla sua resta di rane in mano" (with his string of frogs in his hand), trying to sell the frogs to the villagers. "Resta" means "string," but obviously to Lawrence it looked like "resti" (remains); and he has Pino the Tome walk "with the remains of his frogs in his hand."

For "genitore" (father), he writes "parents"; for "rabbrividivano" (shivered), "burnt again"; for "seguitava" (here, he kept on), "he went behind"; for "per tirarlo via a viva forza" (to pull him away with brute force), "to get him away alive"; for the exclamatory expression, "gliela dessero a lui sul capo la zappa" (they could hit him on the head with the hoe), "so they gave him a taste of the pick-handle on his head," which is not true at all. For "una bella veste per le feste" (a beautiful holiday dress), Lawrence writes "a fine new dress for the festival," although there is no allusion to a festival in the story; for "si lasciò raggiungere dalla moglie" (he let his wife catch up with him), "he permitted himself to go back to his wife"; for "imbambolati" (drowsy), "like a disturbed child"; for "lucertola" (lizard), "firefly"; for "giaciglio" (hard bed on the ground), "hard biscuit"; and even for "Pasqua" (Easter), "Christmas." Errors of this type are countless.

There are also incongruous additions and interpolations which often put a passage in direct contradiction with the very spirit of a story. In "The She-Wolf," as Nanni sees the woman standing before him, "with her arrogant breasts and her coal-black eyes," still half asleep he stretches out his hands, "brancolando" (gropingly), toward her; Lawrence adds: "to keep her off," which is anything but what Nanni did, as is indicated by "brancolando"—it does not mean to push away, but to search for something, though in this case somewhat unconsciously.

At times Lawrence changes the person that governs a verb, with confusing results. Translating the sentence, "ma ti vuol bene e parla per il tuo meglio" (but *she* loves you and speaks for your own good), he writes: "but *I'm* fond of you and speak for your own sake." Or he singularizes a plural pronoun: "una volta don Venerando li sorprese" (once Don Venerando caught *them*) becomes "one day Don Venerando caught *him*," which clashes with the immediate context and puzzles the reader.

Then there are occasional omissions in Lawrence's translations. These are probably mere oversights and a consequence of the speed with which he worked, since they are comparatively rare and occur in passages that present no difficulty. In the first section of "Black Bread," after stating that *compare* Nanni's children at the death of their father were left in extreme poverty and had to think each for himself, Verga adds:

"l'è che è una bella cosa quando si può piangere i morti, senza pensare ad altro!" (It's a good thing to be able to cry over one's dead without other worries!)—a sad and bitter comment epitomizing the whole story and conveying the Verghian concept of the harsh fight for life which the poor must unceasingly carry on, without even being able to afford the time to think of their dead. Lawrence omits it.

There is a similar omission in "Rosso Malpelo." Malpelo had become used to everything, even to fasting, "when the boss punished him by taking away his bread or his soup"; but he said that the boss "had never taken away his share of blows." Verga comments, still in Malpelo's words: "ma le busse non costavano nulla" (but blows didn't cost anything). These words reflect the unending economic worry of the people about whom Verga writes, and at the same time echo the primitively Machiavellian reasoning of Malpelo; to him blows were a sign of power in the person who distributed them and of subjection in the one who received them. They do not appear in Lawrence.

There are also careless omissions of negatives. In "Rosso Malpelo," after speaking of worthless old donkeys, Verga says; "e Malpelo, certo, *non valeva* di più"; Lawrence translates; "and Malpelo, certainly, *was worth* more than they," without noticing that this positive statement is rejected by the context.

Such errors—and I have mentioned only a few, taking them from a very limited number of stories[18]—cannot be dismissed as negligible; they affect both the narrative texture and the artistic significance of the text.

The speed with which he worked was certainly a major reason for the serious faults of Lawrence's versions. One of his friends and traveling companions writes:

> [After breakfast] Lawrence sat curled up with a schoolboy's copy-book in his hand, writing away. He was translating Giovanni Verga's short stories from the Sicilian [*sic*]. Across the pages of the copy-book his hand moved rhythmically, unhesitatingly, leaving a trail of exquisite, small writing as legible as print. No blots, no scratchings marred its beauty. When the book was finished, he wrapped and tied it up, sending it off to the publisher.[19]

Such an approach is particularly dangerous in translations. A translator must reread and correct, often weighing again and again a single word or a sentence. Lawrence, apparently, would not devote so much

[18] The examples cited here are from Lawrence's translations of the following stories: "Cavalleria Rusticana," "La Lupa," "Jeli the Herdsman," "Rosso Malpelo," "Malaria," "The Story of Saint Joseph's Ass," and "Black Bread," with one example from "The Gentry." There are many other errors in these same stories. Lawrence translated twenty-one short stories and the long novel, *Mastro Don Gesualdo*.

[19] E. and A. Brewster, *D. H. Lawrence: Reminiscences and Correspondence* (London, 1934), p. 250. The "publisher" to whom the Brewsters refer was Lawrence's agent Curtis Brown.

time to another's work, however greatly he admired it. He would have been bound to fall into many errors even if he had possessed a perfect knowledge of the language of the original. Inaccuracies which are clearly the result of haste appear on almost every page.

Translating "Cavalleria rusticana," Lawrence found "s'era fatta sposa" (literally "had got married," but in Verga "had become engaged"), and with the help of the context gave the correct version. But when the same expression, with the same meaning, appears several pages later in *Vita dei campi*, at the beginning of "Rosso Malpelo," the translator is not helped by the immediate context, does not remember "Cavalleria rusticana," is in a hurry, and writes "had got married."

At the end of "Black Bread" Verga uses the word "palmento," a storehouse on Sicilian farms, housing the mill, the wine press, and other implements. Lawrence, who clearly does not know the meaning of the word, tries to give a translation that makes some sense and writes "mill-stone." But the sense remains obscure, since it is hard to imagine a little lamp "hung to the pillar of the great mill-stone," and we read that no one had the courage to go and sleep in his corner (of the "mill-stone"). In the following story "palmento" occurs again, Lawrence translates "wine-press." On the next page Verga writes: "il palmento, spalancato, senza tetto, etc." Now Lawrence translates: "the press-house, dismantled and thrown open, roofless, etc." The context finally guided the translator toward a nearly correct rendition. But he did not take the trouble to go back to the preceding pages to replace an erroneous version with the one that he had at last discovered.

In some cases Lawrence simply misreads words. On the last page of "The Story of Saint Joseph's Ass," Verga writes that the passers-by "tiravano per la coda" (pulled by the tail) the poor donkey that had fallen lifeless to the ground. Lawrence, instead of "coda" (tail), sees "corda" (rope)—and the passers-by pull the donkey "by the rope." In "Jeli the Herdsman" the little boy tells his rich friend, who is going to school, that "anybody who knows how *to write* is like one who . . . can carry" words "in his pocket, and even send them" wherever he wants to. Through some metamorphosis, in Lawrence's eyes "scrivere" (to write) became "leggere" (to read) and he translates: "anybody who knows how *to read*" is like a person who can send his words wherever he wants to. Sometimes he simply does not see a consonant. When he meets "scampagnata" (a picnic in the country), he reads "scampanata," and writes "the ringing of the bells"; when he sees "cassette" (boxes), he reads "casette" and writes "little huts."

Lawrence's translations were very well received. For many readers they represented a discovery; only a few scholars in the English-speaking world knew Verga's works. The general public may have been acquainted with the subject of "Cavalleria rusticana," but only through

Mascagni's opera. In the introduction to *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories* and in a posthumously published paper originally intended as a prefatory note to *Mastro Don Gesualdo*,[20] Lawrence himself mentions the opera, adding that Verga wrote the libretto. He was wrong; the libretto had been written by G. Targioni-Tozzetti and G. Menasci, adapting Verga's one-act dramatization of the story.

The critics and the reviewers of Lawrence's translations generally dwelt on Verga and on the literary significance of his works. In their appraisals of the stories, some repeated Lawrence's statements in his prefaces, especially the preface to *Cavalleria Rusticana*, which contains some questionable remarks along with occasional good criticism.

The reviewers who mentioned the quality of the translations expressed enthusiastic praise. Obviously they had not checked the originals, and did not realize that what they called the "technical skill" of the translator involved nothing but a hasty and often inaccurate transcription of the Italian, word for word, comma for comma. *Dial*'s anonymous reviewer went so far as to declare that "Mr. Lawrence's translation" was "good fortune no less for the reader than for the author."[21]

In Italy, only Carlo Linati,[22] a good writer but not one to be trusted as a scholar or a critic, commented on Lawrence's translations from Verga in highly laudatory terms. Clearly he too failed to check the versions with the originals. Moreover, he shows ignorance of some elementary facts; with the volume of Lawrence's letters on his desk, he did not know that the English novelist, besides *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Mastro Don Gesualdo*, had also translated *Novelle rusticane*.

Despite all their faults, one cannot deny the merits of Lawrence's translations. His name, already famous, was instrumental in familiarizing the English-reading public with Verga's major works, as yet almost totally unknown in England and in the United States. This alone would entitle him to our gratitude. And occasionally he achieves some beautiful passages, powerful and impressive, worthy of the original. Had he taken the time for a better understanding of Verga's expressions and images, and had he corrected and polished his translations, he might have given us a flawless reproduction of a classic. But unfortunately he was satisfied with a first, hasty draft. As a result, his translations do not belong in the realm of art, but rather in that of commerce, where everything is temporary and provisional and what really counts is not the reproduction of a literary work, but the market. Among these commercial products, where grave errors are extremely common and

[20] *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories*, p. 33; *Phoenix, The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence* (London, 1936), p. 223.

[21] July 1925. The reviewer writes of the *Little Novels of Sicily*.

[22] *Pegaso*, Apr. 1933, pp. 386-387. Linati's article discusses, rather sketchily, and superficially, Lawrence's contacts with Italy.

the most diversified authors—from Verga to Moravia to Guareschi—sound alike, Lawrence's translations rate among the best. A classic, however, should not suffer this fate.

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# TRANSLATIONS OF NOH PLAYS

ROY E. TEELE

IT WAS in the autumn of 1868 that A. B. Mitford, Lord Redesdale, accompanied the Duke of Edinburgh to what he believed was the first performance of Noh plays for foreigners. Three years later he published an account of those plays; he was impressed by the "nasal recitative" and described the accompanying instruments as "mouth-organ, flute, drum, and other classical instruments." Having been told beforehand that the plays were "utterly unintelligible" because of "puns and plays upon words," he made arrangements "with difficulty" to learn the "arguments of the different pieces" with the assistance of a "man of letters."[1]

Since then other reports have attracted the West to the Japanese classical drama called the Noh play. With or without the aid of "men of letters" and filled with more or fewer pieces of misinformation such as the "mouth-organ" which Lord Redesdale thought he saw, the accounts have been many and varied. Though Lord Redesdale's description of the performance includes some strange and doubtful details, his summaries of the plays he saw are remarkably clear and accurate.

Writing in 1899, Lafcadio Hearn, a zealous advocate of Japanese culture, discouraged a young man who had prepared a rough translation of a Noh play: "I had no idea . . . when I suggested the *utai* [Noh plays], of the enormous labor that would be required to prepare a few of these for western readers."[2] Nevertheless, despite the labor required (sometimes, indeed, without it), 94 different plays, nearly one-half of the 210 plays in the current repertory, were translated into English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish between 1868 and 1955. Some have been translated more than once; a total of 163 translations exist. Ranging from highly "creative" adaptations to virtually unreadable literal versions, these translations present a real problem of selection for the prospective reader with interest in the plays but little information or background in Japanese literature.

A student of English literature, for example, who wishes to learn more about Noh plays because he knows of their influence on the plays of W. B. Yeats must wonder which of the translations he should read. Knowing something of Yeats, he doubtless knows that it was through his friendship with Ezra Pound that Yeats learned of the plays. Then should he read the Pound-Fenollosa versions? It is unlikely, yet possible, that he might see Professor Sadler's comments on those trans-

[1] A. B. Mitford, *Tales of Old Japan* (London, 1871), I, 157.

[2] Ichikawa Sanki, ed., *Some New Letters and Writings of Lafcadio Hearn* (Tokyo, 1925), pp. 249-250.

lations: "elegant in parts, [they] bear little relation to the Japanese text."[3] Or he might read Dr. Arthur Waley's succinct and judicious (yet ambiguous) remark: "wherever Mr. Pound had adequate material to work upon he used it admirably."[4]

There are brief bibliographies, such as the one at the end of Waley's *Nō Plays of Japan* and of the Japan Travel Bureau publications on Noh.[5] And there are more exhaustive lists published by the American Council of Learned Societies and the Maison Franco-Japonaise.[6] These serve to guide the reader to various translations, but give no indication either of their reliability or of their literary quality. The purpose of the present study is to provide such a guide, beginning with the Pound-Fenollosa translations and continuing through the work of the major translators: B. H. Chamberlain, Wilhelm Gundert, F. A. Lombard, M. Minagawa, Noël Péri, Gaston Renondeau, Francisco Rivas Vicuna, S. L. Sadler, Steinilber-Oberlin and Kuni Matsuo, Marie Stopes, Beatrice Lane Suzuki, Wolfgang von Gersdorff, and Arthur Waley, as well as the more interesting work of other translators. In general the passages quoted and compared here have been chosen for their poetic merit, with the hope of suggesting some of the variety of poetry to be found in the plays.

Most controversial, perhaps, but tremendously important in introducing Noh plays to a wider audience than the academic translators had found, Pound's translations were the result of genuine enthusiasm. In December 1913 Pound wrote to friends of his delight in the material he had found in Ernest Fenollosa's manuscripts. The next month he sent a play to Harriet Monroe for publication in *Poetry Magazine* "in place of my own stuff." Other plays were subsequently published in a variety of little magazines, and later collected in a book, which has recently been reprinted. That these translations met with adverse criticism from specialists in Japanese literature is not surprising; yet Pound did not cease to believe in the value of the plays themselves and of

[3] S. L. Sadler, *Japanese Plays* (Sidney, Australia, 1934), p. vii.

[4] Arthur Waley, *The Nō Plays of Japan* (London, 1954), p. 304 (first impression, 1921).

[5] Waley, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-305; Toki Zemmaro, *Japanese No Plays* (Tokyo, Japan Travel Bureau, 1954), pp. 196-198, a simple and valuable introduction to Noh plays and their production; Nogami Toyoichiro, *Japanese Noh Plays* (Tokyo, 1954), pp. 65-66, a reprint of a volume published before the war by the Japan Travel Bureau.

[6] Sakanishi Shio, Marion Addington, and P. D. Perkins, *A List of Translations of Japanese Drama into English, French, and German* (Washington, 1935). This is now out of date, and even in its own day was tentative. It is marred by inaccuracies, but its primary weakness lies in the researchers' willingness to accept translations at their face value. Thus Colin Campbell Clements' "Seven Plays of Old Japan" in *Poet-Lore*, XXXI (1921), are dutifully listed as new translations, though they are actually taken without acknowledgement or thanks from various earlier versions. "Bibliographie du théâtre japonais," *Bulletin de la Maison Franco-Japonaise*, n.s., III (1953).

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Fenollosa's versions, though he granted the need for revision if they were to become "a standard work on the subject," and for a time looked for a collaborator who not only knew Japanese but also understood the Noh play.[7]

Among Pound's translations *Hagoromo* is doubtless one of the favorites, as the original has long and consistently been popular in Japan. The story of a moon maiden who at last persuaded a fisherman to give back her magic robe which he had found, so that she could use it to return to her home in the sky, it is so simple and dramatic that it has universal appeal. The many lyric passages describing spring scenes can be appreciated by any reader. In *The Noh Drama* this play is printed in three forms: the Japanese text in Chinese characters and Japanese syllabary, the text in Roman letters, and a literal English translation. The latter two are given here:

| | |
|---|---|
| Kono matsubara no, | This pine grove's |
| Haru no iro wo Mio-ga-saki, | Spring colour {let her see / Mio Cape—pun} |
| Tsuki Kiyomi-gata Fuji no yuki, | The moon {clear-seen-bay / Kiyomi Bay—pun} Fuji's snow |
| Izure ya haru no akebono, | Which spring dawn |
| Tagui-nami mo matsukaze mo, | Matchless waves and pine breeze also, |
| Nodoka-naru ura no arisama. | (The) peaceful shores sight.[8] |

This is how they appear in Pound's version:

> The pine-waste of Miwo puts on the colour of spring. The bay of Kiyomi lies clear before the snow upon Fuji. Are not all these presages of the spring? There are but few ripples beneath the piny wind.[9]

A Japanese reader would gasp to hear one of his country's beauty spots called a "waste"; but before indicating other errors, let us look at Chamberlain's version:

> But here on Miho's pine-clad shore I'd stray,
> Or where the moon in bright unclouded glory
> Shines on Kiyómi's lea,
> And where on Fusiyama's summit hoary
> The snows look on the sea,
> While breaks the morning merrily!
> But of these three, beyond compare
> The wave-wash'd shore of Miho is most fair
> When through the pines the breath of spring is playing.[10]

and at Waley's:

> This tint of springtime in the woods,
> This colour on the headland,

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[7] *The Letters of Ezra Pound*, ed. by D. D. Paige (New York, 1950), pp. 27, 30, 214.

[8] *The Noh Drama* (Tokyo, 1937), p. 39. Literal translation by William Aker.

[9] Ezra Pound, *The Translations* (New York, n.d.), p. 313.

[10] Basil Hall Chamberlain, *The Classical Poetry of the Japanese* (Boston, 1880), pp. 143-144.

Snow on the mountain,
Moonlight on the clear shore,—
Which fairest? Nay, each peerless
At the dawn of a Spring day.
Waves lapping, wind in the pine-trees whispering
Along the quiet shore.[11]

Pound's version has missed the implied comparison of the three scenes, and errs in taking these scenes as "presages of spring." We may note that Chamberlain's rhyme leads to the addition of "bright unclouded glory" to the original's simple "moon" and to the change of "Fuji's snow" into "summit hoary." And ". . . breaks the morning merrily" is indicative of a style of versifying which strikes a reader today as outdated and amusing. This is frequently true of Chamberlain's translations, otherwise remarkable for having been done when many of the critical and lexical aids which scholars today rely upon were not available. This passage shows Waley deliberately changing place names to general nouns, so that, for example, Mio Cape becomes merely the "headland." In previous lines these names have been accurately given, so the change here is not serious. Revon's translation of *Hagoromo* is fragmentary, with a summary of omitted passages; it does not contain this passage.[12] Neither does the translation by Émile Steinilber-Oberlin and Kuni Matsuo.[13]

The inaccuracy of Pound's version is characteristic of many serious errors in his understanding of the direct meaning of the text of this and other plays. There are also frequent errors in the transcription of Japanese words. An example occurs a few lines before the passage quoted above: "The white kiromo, the black kiromo," where "kiromo" is a misreading for "koromo" (the word for "clothing," which appears in modified form in the title of the play, *Hagoromo*). The mistake is more serious than the change of one letter; for here, for linguistic and metrical reasons, the word is read simply "e." Obviously the correction of such a misreading is unimportant for a reader who knows no Japanese; but by the same token for such a reader it is meaningless—or worse—to preserve Japanese words in their original form.

But much more serious is the fact that Pound has arranged the quoted lines as prose. Had his translation of the whole play been so arranged there would be no question; but other passages are in verse. Yet this passage above all others should be in verse form; for it is the opening of the *kuse*, lines in poetic meter sung by the chorus in strict time to the drums. However, such errors as well as errors in reading of the text should properly be attributed to Fenollosa, not to Pound. Some

[11] Waley, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

[12] Michel Revon, *Anthologie de la littérature japonaise* (Paris, 1910), pp. 305-311.

[13] É. Steinilber-Oberlin and Kuni Matsuo, *Le Livre des Nô, drames légendaires du vieux Japon* (Paris, 1929), pp. 48-55.

details of Fenollosa's study of Noh singing are to be found in the notes Pound includes with the translations[14] and in Mrs. Fenollosa's brief biography of her husband.[15]

I have talked with the "Takeyo" whom Pound mentions, the son of Minoru Umewaka who was Fenollosa's first and chief teacher. This venerable actor, still able to sing certain roles magnificently though past seventy, answered questions about Fenollosa, though prefacing his answers by saying he did not remember many details from those lessons fifty years ago. With some relish he told of one incident which occurred during a lesson. Suddenly Mrs. Fenollosa, who had accompanied her husband, rose from her seat, went over to her husband, and tapped his abdomen, telling him that his voice production was wrong. Unlike his teacher, he was singing from the throat, she said, rather than from the diaphragm. Mr. Umewaka could not remember serious discussions of Noh plays with Fenollosa and his interpreter (he had a student interpreter with him even during his last stay in Japan), but he vividly remembered this (to a Japanese) unheard-of conduct of his wife. He remembered too that Fenollosa studied principally the famous sections, "arias" as it were, rather than plays as a whole. One other aspect of his studies Fenollosa himself described in a brief article; he copied down the text and notes on a Western scale as his teacher sang the lesson, a method which must have been difficult in the extreme. Concentration on particular passages, of course, must account for some of the fragmentariness of the translations; for it is to be expected that he would give most of his attempts to translating the beautiful and famous passages which he practiced for Noh singing lessons, filling in the other parts when and if he had time.

In only one case do we have Fenollosa's version to compare with Pound's. In an article in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Fenollosa gives his translation of some lines from *Kinuta*. Obviously these had been prepared for publication and we must not assume that his manuscript notes were similarly polished:

> The colour of the moon, the breath-colour of the wind:
> Even to the point of frost gathering in the shadow,
> The sound of cloth-beating, storms at night.
> The cry of sorrow, the hum of insects,
> Of these all composed into a falling tear-dew,
> "Horo, horo, hara, hara," whispering;
> Which of all these is the sound of the cloth-beating?[16a]

These lines become prose in Pound's version:

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[14] Pound, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-238.

[15] Ernest Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art* (New York, n.d.), pp. xvi, xxi.

[16a] Ernest Fenollosa, "Notes on the Japanese Lyric Drama," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, XXIII (1901), 129, 137.

. . . the colour of the moon, the breath-colour of the wind, even the points of frost that assemble in the shadow. A time that brings awe to the heart, a sound of beaten cloths, and storms in the night, a crying in the storm, a sad sound of the crickets, make one sound in the falling dew, a whispering lamentation, hera, hera, a sound in the cloth of beauty.[16b]

Was it difficulty in reading the manuscript which turned "sound of the cloth-beating" into "sound in the cloth of beauty"? Here the meaning has been lost, without any gain in verbal beauty. And why has "horo, horo, hara, hara" become "hera, hera"? The Japanese onomatopoetic syllables, with their flapped "r's," suggest the "drip-drop" of falling rain and tears, and the "tap-tap" of the beating paddles, while "hera, hera" is weak and meaningless. And yet how carefully here, as in several other of the translations, the phrase "breath-colour of the wind" is preserved! What it means in English I cannot imagine; but in Japanese it is a compound with the general meaning of "appearance." It is true that the Chinese characters with which this compound, "keshiki," is written have among their meanings, when used separately, "breath" and "color." But Chinese and Japanese compound formation is rarely so simple as addition, and here Fenollosa has added two and two to get ten—or zero. Neither in mediaeval nor in modern Japanese does the word mean "breath-colour."

Here, for comparison, are two French translations, the first a scholarly and accurate version by Noël Péri:

> L'éclat de la lune, l'aspect de (la nature agitée par le) vent,
> Jusqu'au givre, déposé dans l'ombre,
> Et à travers l'effroi de cette heure,
> Le son de *kinuta*, le grondement du vent dans la nuit,
> La voix de ma douleur, les cris des insectes;
> A ses bruits mêlée la rosée de mes larmes qui tombent
> Horo-horo, hara-hara-hara,
> Est-ce donc là le son du *kinuta*?[17]

The second is by Steinilber-Oberlin and Kuni Matsuo:

La lune éclaire le paysage. Le vent qui passe dans les rameaux caresse sur les feuilles de l'érable, le givre cristallin, et porte à l'époux le son des cadences familières et les plaintes de l'épouse qui gémit, comme crie douloureusement l'insecte amoureux dans la nuit, et le son perlé de ses larmes qui tombent en gouttes de rosée . . . Une, deux trois, quatre . . . sont-ce des larmes? Sont-ce les coups frappés sur le billot de bois?[18]

How far these lines deviate from the original only a glance is needed to discover. Some of the added words are perhaps implicit in the Japanese text; and it is true that "une, deux, trois, quatre" suggest the falling drops by another method than onomatopoetic words. Yet such

[16b] Pound, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

[17] Noël Péri, *"Kinuta," Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XX (1920), 88.

[18] E. Steinilber-Oberlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

additions and changes are not accurate translation, and, when excessively employed (which is often the case in the Steinilber-Oberlin volume of fifteen translations), the result is not translation at all but a new play based more or less on the Japanese theme. In only one play, *Kakitsubata*, has Pound deviated so far from the original.

One of the most frequent faults in the Pound-Fenollosa translations is one indicated in *Tamura*: "There is a break here in the notes. There should follow a chorus about cherries under the moon."[19] These words, in parentheses, appear only once; yet passages of various lengths are often omitted. It is obvious that Fenollosa's manuscript must have been fragmentary; not having checked the translations carefully for publication, Fenollosa himself may not have realized how fragmentary. The two plays about Ono no Komachi, *Sotoba Komachi* and *Kayoi Komachi*, contain less than a third of the lines of the original.

Pound's version of *Kagekiyo* is nearly four pages shorter than Waley's translation. Some of the phrases omitted are unimportant and not very good poetry; others are very significant and contain the very kind of concrete detail which Pound himself would have insisted on using had he known the original text. Next to *Shunkan* in its tragic nobility, *Kagekiyo* is a magnificent play. Here are some splendid lines from the end of the play as Pound translated them:

> These were the deeds of old, but oh, to tell them! to be telling them over now in his wretched condition. His life in the world is weary, he is near the end of his course. "Go back," he would say to his daughter. "Pray for me when I am gone from the world, for I shall then count upon you as we count on a lamp in the darkness ... we who are blind."[20]

Waley's translation of the play is excellent; his version of this passage is:

> I am old: I have forgotten—things unforgettable!
> My thoughts are tangled: I am ashamed.
> But little longer shall this world,
> This sorrowful world torment me.
> The end is near: go to your home;
> Pray for my soul departed, child, candle to my darkness,
> Bridge to salvation![21]

And here is the same passage as translated by Gaston Renondeau, like Noël Péri a careful scholar, but perhaps not so elegant in style:

> Cette histoire évoque mon passé.
> (Le corps) en décrépitude, l'esprit lui-même
> Obscurci, quelle honte!
> Ce monde, après tout, ne me causera plus longtemps
> De souffrances: ma fin est proche.
> Hâte-toi d'en retourner. Quand je n'y serai plus,

[19] Pound, *op. cit.*, p. 260.
[20] Pound, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-322.
[21] Waley, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

Pour mon âme donne ta prière pour que l'aveugle
Dans les ténèbres soit guidé par sa lumière,
Et dans les chemins difficiles trouve un secours.[22]

In his overemphasis on "telling" the old deeds Pound has scanted the particulars of Kagekiyo's "wretched condition," and has omitted the idea of both the bridge and the road. At the same time it must be noted that Waley's first line rather exceeds the original "Mukashi wasurenu monogatari," "Of old, unforgotten stories." Because of the difference in the structure of English and Japanese it is sometimes necessary to supply one verb, but Waley here supplies two, makes "mukashi" modify the speaker—which it could not possibly do—and also brings in the dramatic opposition of "forgotten" and "unforgettable," which simply does not exist in the original. His other lines, however, are accurate, and with their short phrases are very effective in conveying the feeling of the old man's grief.

Dr. Marie Stopes translates the beginning of this passage:

He who has told the tale of olden days—
Days ne'er forgotten—is now sadly waned
And e'en confused in mind. Ah, what a shame!
The end of all this woe of life is near . . .[23]

Though the meaning is quite clear and the rough blank verse is readable, the translation has a slightly old-fashioned ring, and on occasion there is padding to round out the line. In her translations this remarkable woman, who traveled alone for months in the remoter parts of Japan in 1907 and 1908[24] looking for geological specimens, was especially fortunate in having the assistance of Professor Joji Sakurai; she herself says that he insisted on accuracy even when she begged to expand some "poetical conceit."[25] On the whole her translations are accurate and readable, though one must prefer Waley's where they have translated the same plays. Her translation of *Motomezuka* is virtually the only one available, although Francisco Rivas Vicuna produced an extremely diffuse and expanded version called *La tomba de la doncella* based on the same general theme.

The characteristics of Rivas Vicuna's translations may best be seen in his version of *Kagekiyo*, which he mistransliterates as "*Kanekiyo*," being misled by the nasalizing of the medial "g." What Waley gives in seven lines Rivas Vicuna expands to twenty, beginning with these:

Este que cuente la pasada gloria,
La de los días cuya lumbre fuera,
Tiempos que nunca olvidará la historia,

[22] Gaston Renondeau, "*Kagekiyo*," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XXVII (1927), 77.
[23] Marie C. Stopes, *Plays of Old Japan, The 'Nō'* (New York, 1913), p. 68.
[24] Marie C. Stopes, *A Journal from Japan* (London, 1910), *passim*.
[25] Stopes, *Plays of Old Japan*, pp. 31-32.

Kanekiyo, al que todo un clán temiera,
¡Ah que vergüenza! yace desterrado,
En pobre choza al borde del camino...[26]

Since he believed that explanatory material must be included in the text so that foreign readers would understand the embodied feeling and philosophy, Rivas Vicuna doubled, in some cases tripled, the length of the plays. For a scholar to add explanatory material would be dangerous enough; but, when an amateur both in language and the ideas of the Japanese tries to explain what he sees in the play as he translates, the result is passages which are hopelessly wrong. The maiden from the moon in *Hagoromo,* for example, is called a "visión de amor," an idea which is quite out of place. Almost invariably the feelings are sentimentalized, and the lines are scarcely recognizable. Fortunately, however, all of the five plays Rivas Vicuna "translated" have been translated by others.

Émile Steinilber-Oberlin and Kuni Matsuo's volume of Noh plays includes a translation of *Kagekiyo.* They translate the beginning of the passage quoted above from other translators as follows:

Une autre fois, c'était, je crois, le soir d'un combat... Oui, je crois... Je suis si vieux!... excusez-moi... mes souvenirs se brouillent... J'ai oublié des faits—inoubliables! Je ne puis continuer... Ah! ma fin est proche! Dans peu de jours, ce monde, ce monde de souffrance sera fini pour moi! Voilà que le jour baisse... L'accalmie se fait en mon âme. Merci d'être venue. Retourne chez toi, enfant! Prie pour mon âme. Tout cela n'est plus qu'un souvenir, vois-tu, un pauvre souvenir qu'un aveugle...[27]

The many exclamation points and dots, which may indicate omissions or pauses in the old man's speech, surely tear a passion to tatters and quite betray the original. Pathos becomes sentimental bathos, just as in Rivas Vicuna's version of the same play. The phrase "J'ai oublié des faits—inoubliables!" is reminiscent of Waley's translation, and a few other phrases seem to be taken from other versions; the translators are often mistaken in the attribution of lines; many passages are added and others omitted; there are many errors throughout. In view of the labor involved in the translation of fifteen plays (all of them translated elsewhere, however), a critic should at least express gratitude for the effort. Yet it is difficult to forgive the cheapening of tone, the misconception of motive and emotion.

Wolfgang von Gersdorff's translation of three plays[28] also omits many passages and so changes the tone of the plays that they are scarcely recognizable. There is, however, little addition; all the plays are cut to

[26] Francisco Rivas Vicuna, *El drama lírico japonés, Las danzas No, Nogaku* (Tokyo, 1919), p. 85.

[27] Steinilber-Oberlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92.

[28] Wolfgang von Gersdorff, *Japanische Dramen für die deutsche Bühne* (Jena, 1926).

roughly half their original length, chiefly by omission of opening lines and choral passages. Fortunately these plays are all available in other translations. Bertolt Brecht's reworking of *Taniko*[29] (from Waley's translation) into two plays—*Der Jasager* and *Der Neinsager*, which make no pretension to being translation—is for the most part closer to the original than the work of von Gersdorff, Steinilber-Oberlin, or Rivas Vicuna.

In comparison, the Pound-Fenollosa translations are real contributions to Western understanding of Japanese literature. In the description of a young warrior in *Kumasaka*, Pound has these lines: "Ushiwaka stood unafraid; he seized a small halberd and fought like a lion in earnest . . . He fought so cleverly that he felled the thirteen who opposed him."[30] Taking rhyming couplets as his medium, M. Minagawa translated the same passage:

> But young Ushiwaka knew naught of fear;
> A short drawn sword in hand the hero met
> The raiders gallantly and on them set.
> Ah! how he fought a marvel is to tell:
> The lion's fury . . .
> . . . he slew
> Thirteen men on the spot who first came through.[31]

Waley's version is as follows:

> But little Ushiwaka showed no fear.
> He drew his belt-sword and met them.
> The Lion Pounce . . .
> He parried . . . They thrust at him but could not prevail.
> And now, done to death, on the same pillow head to head they lie.[32]

The fact that a technical fencing term, not a comparison with an animal, is intended is made clear in Waley's lines. The translation of the last line, omitted both by Pound and by Minagawa, is a remarkably evocative one, owing nothing to Waley except his skill in saying in English almost exactly what the Japanese says. Minagawa's lines, however, are so much better than one would expect to find in rhyming couplets, and so far superior to what one has a right to expect of a foreigner writing in English, that one may overlook the almost inevitable padding and occasional deviation from exact meaning in search for a rhyme. Usually accurate and always readable, Minagawa's translations deserve more attention than they have received, especially his versions of *Yama-uba* and *Kayoi Komachi*; for the former appears in a Western language

[29] Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke*, II (London, 1938). Eric Bentley's comment that Brecht's Noh plays "are utterly different in spirit from Yeats's" is true to the extent that Brecht has added very little to Waley's translation, whereas Yeats wrote original drama based on the Noh form.

[30] Pound, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

[31] M. Minagawa, "Kumasaka," *The Young East*, II (1927), 418.

[32] Waley, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

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only in his translation and the latter is complete (Pound's translation is fragmentary).

Pound's version of *Sotoba Komachi* is almost as fragmentary as his *Kayoi Komachi*. His *Aoi no Ue* is basically wrong in taking the main character to be the jealous spirit of Aoi no Ue. His versions of *Chō-ryō*, *Genjō*, and *Suma Genji* are accurate in general, though approximately one-third of the lines are omitted. His translation of *Shōjō* is both complete and accurate.

One of the most beautiful in Pound's collection is *Kakitsubata*. Alone among his versions, it has extraneous material consistently introduced into the text. In some cases the material doubtless was intended by Fenollosa for use in footnotes. Pound also introduces refrain-like lines, charming but with no basis in the original:

> Wandering like a piece of cloud, at last
> After years he came
> And looking upon the waves at Ise and Owari,
> He longed for his brief years of glory:
> The waves, the breakers return,
> But my glory comes not again,
> Narihira, Narihira,
> My glory comes not again.[33]

In Professor Sadler's translation the lines are:

> Along the coast of Ise and Owari
> He drifted like a cloud,
> With nothing to look at
> But sullen billows,
> His heart full of regrets
> For what he had left behind.[34]

While Sadler has changed the order of some of the lines—and the poem quoted in the fifth and sixth lines surely deserves fuller expression—yet he has rendered the main sense of the passage. Pound's repetition of the name of Narihira suggests another speaker and shifts the whole emphasis of the lines. It is interesting, however, that throughout the play there are places where Pound has come closer to the original for a moment than Sadler. Most often Pound seizes on some concrete detail and makes it work poetically as it did in the original, while Sadler tends to translate the general, underlying idea clearly, using whatever detail or as much detail as fits into his expression of that idea.

Professor Sadler's series of translations from various types of Japanese drama is a real contribution to Western knowledge of the subject, just as his translation of the *Heike Monogatari* has given to the West a full version of one of the great Japanese mediaeval novels. That this novel is not so well known as Waley's *Tale of Genji* may be due to its

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[33] Pound, *op. cit.*, p. 337.
[34] Sadler, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

less romantic subject matter, or to the fact that it was published in a scholarly periodical where the general reader is not likely to see it. Certainly this Australian scholar's work deserves wider reading than it seems to have had. At the same time it should be noted that in his Noh translations there are often omissions, particularly of difficult passages. Actual errors are rare; but the sin of omission cannot be entirely overlooked, nor the fact that he has failed to describe the action on the stage.

Beyond doubt Waley's is the largest group of accurate and beautiful translations of Noh plays in English; the collection is deservedly popular. Excellently chosen to appeal to the Western reader, the plays are taken largely from the fourth and fifth classes ("mad plays" which show a variety of human feelings and "demon plays" which are quite spectacular); yet the first three classes also are adequately represented. After thirty-five years, the introduction to his book needs revision in view of the scholarly work being done in Japanese, but the translations themselves are still fresh and beautiful. What is chiefly lacking in Waley's book is a clear description of the plays as plays. Just what happens on the stage? How much of the description of action given by the text is realistically mimed, how much expressed symbolically, and how much is seen only in the mind's eye? Surely a reader may legitimately ask and expect an answer to such questions.

It is in connection with the dance that Waley makes his few real errors. Thus, he frequently translates the phrase "ha no mai" as "broken dance," the literal meaning, whereas it is a technical term which should not be translated. Rather a definition is needed or some general equivalent in English. That it is a short dance, slower than the "kyū no mai" and faster than the "chū no mai," is perhaps not very helpful to the reader who knows nothing of the highly complex art of Noh dancing; still this is surely better than the misleading word "broken" when nothing is broken at all.

The best discussion of all aspects of the Noh is that of Noël Péri,[35] whose translations, like Waley's, combine scholarly accuracy and literary beauty. In the few plays which they have both translated the lines are by no means identical, but the differences are not between right and wrong, but rather between different interpretations inherent in the passage in its original form. In any translation of a literary work of complexity and sophistication it is necessary to choose between various meanings, or to search for a means of projecting the poetic ambiguity of the original into the second language. Difficult in any case, this is particularly difficult when the languages and cultures are so different. Moreover, Noh texts are so complex and allusive, so full of

[35] Noël Péri, "Études sur le drame lyrique japonais," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, IX (1909), 251-280.

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elaborate word play, that even a translation into modern Japanese is difficult.

Continuing Péri's versions of Noh plays in the *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, Gaston Renondeau has translated sixteen plays, admirably chosen and expressed in clear and polished French. Among the plays there are two each from the first three classes, and six and four, respectively, from the fourth and fifth. Not precisely in mathematical proportion to the actual number of plays in the various classes, this choice nevertheless provides a fair representation of them all. Twelve of the plays had not previously been translated when Renondeau prepared them. While his individual introductions are not so elaborate and scholarly as Péri's, they are better than those of other translators. For scholars, the fact that Renondeau prints the Japanese text he uses opposite his translation, and that he encloses in parentheses the words he feels it necessary to add for the sake of clarity in the translation, is especially commendable. Péri's and Renondeau's translations have been republished in book form by the Maison Franco-Japonaise.[36]

Deserving as wide popularity as Waley's is a new book of English translations called *Japanese Noh Drama*, prepared by the Japanese Classics Translation Committee, the same group which several years ago produced a monumental translation of a considerable part of the *Manyoshu*. The result of cooperation between Japanese scholars and foreign associates, these translations were begun fourteen years ago; the ten plays published are the first of a series of fifty to appear eventually. The translations are generally complete and accurate and the English smooth and fluent. That deserves high praise; but the most exciting part of this work is the use of marginal stage directions with line drawings to show the posture and relative position of the actors.

The Kwanze School of Noh Acting has for years used these line drawings in its singing texts, to show the costume, position, and movement traditionally associated with any given lines. Simple and elegant, and at the same time accurate, these drawings, with the running stage directions, serve to bring the scene to life. Larger drawings which precede each play are likewise beautifully executed and harmonize well with the book's general makeup, though some of the many excellent photographs of Noh performances which are available would have given the reader a more realistic view.

Aimed at a literate but nontechnical audience, the book has a rather short and oversimple introduction. The choice of plays is rather questionable. One of the reasons for the success of Pound's and Waley's books has been the emphasis on the fourth- and fifth-class plays, the most dramatic of the five groups. Here, however, there is only one play

[36] Noël Péri, *Le Nô* (Tokyo, 1944); Gaston Renondeau, *Nô* (Tokyo, 1953) and *Nô* (Tokyo, 1954).

from each of the fourth and fifth classes, with three from the second class (which totals only sixteen out of the two hundred and fifty plays). The fact that seven of the plays had already been translated is somewhat unfortunate, though it should be noted that none of them had been translated by Waley.

In order to compare the new with some earlier translations, here is W. G. Aston's version of some lines from the end of *Takasago*, sometimes called the most perfect in structure of the Noh plays:

> And now, world without end,
> The extended arms of the dancing maidens
> In sacerdotal robes
> Will expel noxious influences...
> Will embrace all good fortune...
> The voice of the breeze,
> As it blows through the firs
> That will grow old together,
> Will yield us delight.[37]

F. V. Dickins translated these lines as follows:

> let arms extended
> and ill fend from the land,
> and arms fair-folded
> embrace all happiness...
> Among the Wedded Pine-trees
> growing old together
> may gentle winds forever
> wake music ever haunting
> and ever world enchanting![38]

And now in the version of the Committee:

> Dread spirits quelling, arms stretched out,
> Life and treasure gathering, arms are inwards drawn...
> The soughing of wind in the Twin Pines
> With gladness fills each heart,
> With gladness fills each heart![39]

Fifty years have made a difference in literary taste, in the choice of words and poetic form. Aston's "world without end" and "noxious influences" and Dickins's "music ever haunting and ever world enchanting" are not only inexact—they are illustrations of a taste for decoration in a late Victorian style which prevented direct clear translation. Of course we should be equally critical of more contemporary literary taste, for example in Steinilber-Oberlin's "o delices adorables" in this same passage. It is good indeed to have a new translation of the play.

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[37] W. G. Aston, *A History of Japanese Literature* (London, 1899), pp. 211-212.

[38] F. V. Dickins, *Primitive and Mediaeval Japanese Texts* (Oxford, 1906), p. 412.

[39] *Japanese Noh Drama, Ten Plays* (Tokyo, 1955), pp. 16-17.

There are three excellent translations of *Eguchi*, by Péri, the Committee, and F. A. Lombard. In general Lombard's version tends to be imprecise, as in this passage:

> They are stopping their boat for the night;
> They would sleep with the waves for a pillow . . .[40]

The Committee's translation makes it quite clear why the courtesans have stopped:

> Mooring our barge,
> Rocked gently by the waves we meet our lovers . . .[41]

Lombard's book, like Sadler's, is a study of the drama in Japan. Both books are extremely valuable in the breadth of material they present. While Sadler gives a wider selection of plays, Lombard's translations are fuller and more fluent and his discussions more complete.

*Funa-Benkei* (Benkei in the Boat), which has been translated by the Committee, is structually interesting for two reasons: the "shite" or principal actor plays completely different roles in the two parts of the play, the beautiful mistress of Yoshitsune in one and the ghost of a vanquished warrior in the other; and the "waki" or secondary actor has a very important and active role. The play is one of a group of seventy or eighty which deviate from the "classical" structure of the Noh play. According to classical form, the "shite" in the first part appears disguised (often as a country man or woman native to the scene of the play), and then, in response to the questions of the "waki," admits who he really is, and in the second part appears in his true form (spirit or demon or dead hero).

*Funa-Benkei* was first translated by Karl Florenz, and has also been translated by Professor George Sansom and Gaston Renondeau, as well as by the Committee. All are sound translations; the following lines show differences in style. In Florenz's prose:

> (zieht er heute hinaus) mit nur wenig mehr als zehn Leute einsam und niedergeschlagen. So mit ergebenen Dienern zum Schiff, (Gesang) das auf und nieder segelt wie Wolken und Wasser (steigen und fallen). Und unbeständig wie Wolken und Wasser ist auch das Schicksal der Menschen.[42]

Sansom turns them into English:

> to-day he leaves stealthily
> with but a score of men
> in the ship to bear him company,
> the ship that sails and rocks
> rising and falling

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[40] Frank Alanson Lombard, *An Outline History of the Japanese Drama* (London, 1928), p. 120.

[41] *Japanese Noh Drama*, p. 119.

[42] Karl Florenz, *Geschichte der japanischen Litteratur* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 395-396.

as the sea and the clouds
unfixed and uncertain
as the Fate of Men.[43]

Renondeau translates:

Une dizaine d'hommes, guère plus, abattus,
Compagnons vraiment dévoués; une barque
Qui s'élève et retombe au (gré du) flot,
Image de l'incertitude de cette vie, hélas![44]

In the version by the Committee the lines run:

Now with heavy heart he mounts the boat
With a small band of trusty followers.
Uncertain is the lot of man,
As floating clouds and running water![45]

In these lines in which the fate of men is compared to the changeableness of sea and clouds, only Sansom has managed to keep the original form yet express the meaning in clear English. "Rising and falling" relates naturally to the ship, then to the sea and clouds, and continues its meaning in relation to the "unfixed" fate of men. Both Florenz and Renondeau make the meaning clear by circumlocution. Here the Committee's translation fails, since it misses these relationships of meaning.

*Ataka*, perhaps the most popular of all since it appears in different forms on the Noh stage, the puppet theater, and the kabuki stage, has been translated by Professor Sansom, Karl Florenz, and F. Brinkley.[46] Brinkley has used alliteration effectively in some lines but has occasionally been led into error by its demands. Sansom's version is on the whole the most accurate and complete of the three.

Wilhelm Gundert, in "Der Schintoismus im japanischen No-Drama," summarizes or translates some fifty plays. Sometimes he devotes only a few lines to a play, sketching the outline of the plot or discussing some aspects of the use of Shintoism in the play; sometimes he summarizes and also quotes some lines in translation; and in other cases he translates the whole or almost the whole of a play. Without going to the original text for each play it is impossible to determine the completeness of the translations, and even then it is not easy to draw the line, for some are so nearly complete that they equal translations which pose as complete in other books. For practical purposes, ten may be considered as complete, though some lines have been omitted. Because of the nature of his study it is natural that Gundert chose plays which

[43] George Sansom, "Translations from the Nō," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, XXXVIII (1910), 138-139.
[44] Gaston Renondeau, "Funa Benkei," *BEFEO*, XXIX (1929), 161, 163.
[45] *Japanese Noh Drama*, p. 169.
[46] Captain F. Brinkley, *Japan, Its History, Arts, and Literature* (Boston and Tokyo, 1901), III, 35-48.

deal with gods; half of the ten translated are god plays (belonging to the first class).

Gundert has translated most of the first part of *Miwa*, which poses many interesting problems in the relationship of the Shinto gods and those of Buddhism, but has omitted a number of lines in the second part. The following lines from the end of the play may be compared with Péri's version for style and accuracy:

> Aufgeht das dunkle Felsentor der Nacht
> Der Gottesoffenbarung Traum, er ist verflogen,
> Und wach hängt noch das Herz ihm nach![47]

> De la Grotte de pierre,
> Comme d'une barrière, la porte s'est ouverte: voici
> s'ouvrir aussi (celle de) la nuit.
> Du rêve si délicieux qu'apporte cette révélation
> C'est maintenant l'éveil; ah! qu'il laisse de regrets![48]

Somewhat pedestrian in style, and not complete in many instances, Gundert's versions are nonetheless valuable, and include many plays not elsewhere translated.

In her introduction and comments emphasizing the Buddhist strain in Noh plays, Mrs. Beatrice Lane Suzuki has not prepared a companion to Gundert's treatise on the use of Shintoism. Her *Nogaku*, a translation of six plays, published in the Wisdom of the East Series, is an unpretentious book. Her own words, "My own versions—for I am neither poet nor philologist—are simple presentations of the story, giving, I hope, a suggestion of the No picture," disarm criticism.[49] Pretending to so little, Mrs. Suzuki chooses six interesting plays, only one of them hitherto translated, and gives a number of summaries of other plays with comments showing her broad understanding of the religious symbolism of the plays. One of the most interesting is *Aridōshi*, technically a god play but actually giving greater prominence to the "waki," the great tenth-century poet and critic Ki no Tsurayuki, than to the god Aridōshi. Mrs. Suzuki's translation is clear but not especially poetic, and her notes are helpful. The omission of something like twenty lines, scattered throughout the play, is particularly serious in the passage which contains a description of Japanese poetry. At the same time there is a tendency to give the general sense without the precise images or details used in the original. An example of this may be found in her version of the poem Tsurayuki composes for the god of the shrine, a poem important to the plot of the play and repeated several times:

> At midnight, when the sky
> By dark cloud is covered o'er,

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[47] Wilhelm Gundert, "Der Schintoismus im japanischen No-Drama," *Mitteilungen der deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens*, XIX (1925), 94.

[48] Péri, *BEFEO*, XX (1920), 23.

[49] Beatrice Lane Suzuki, *Nogaku, Japanese Nō Plays* (New York, 1932), p. 11.

How could I think that the stars
Are always there?[50]

Omitted here are the words "tachi" and "kasanareru," which suggest the rising and gathering of storm clouds, layer upon layer, and the words "ari to," which modify "hoshi" (stars) and together with that word make a pun on the god's name, Aridōshi. It is possible to avoid the inversion and include most of the ideas in this way:

When rain clouds rise and gather,
Layer on layer, in the midnight sky,
Am I supposed to keep in mind
That the stars (and god) are always there behind?

With the exception of the occasional omission of lines, Mrs. Suzuki's translations are accurate as to the general meaning.

Attempting to be both accurate and poetic, and like Sansom trying to express the form of the Japanese rhetorical devices in his translation, P. G. O'Neill has also printed the Japanese form of these devices in his footnotes. His version of *Yuya* is a fine one, and, even though it is the very play which was suggested to Lafcadio Hearn nearly sixty years ago, it is the first complete translation into a Western language. Both Yone Noguchi[51] and a Japanese translation group[52] have made summaries and translated a few lines suggesting the charm of the play, but they could only suggest, while O'Neill's translation conveys much of the charm in English. His *Koi no Omoni*[53] is also the first version in a Western language, and well done. For students interested in using summaries of the plays, O'Neill has prepared a small book[54] which contains brief summaries of 250 plays alphabetically arranged, each preceded by a list of characters and a note on its classification.

D. N. Waugh has translated into fluent free verse another very poetic play, *Matsukaze*. The play had been previously summarized but not translated in its entirety. His version of the passage which Waley translated in order to quote it in his summary begins:

One moon...
But two reflections;
Thrice fill the tide
And four-fold deep the night...[55]

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[50] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[51] Yone Noguchi, "The Sorrow of Yuga," *Japan*, LXI (Nov. 1915), 26 ff. Mr. Noguchi has translated *Ugetsu* and *Utō*, *Poet-Lore*, XXIX (1918), 451-458, and has made summaries of a number of other plays. More poetic than Mrs. Suzuki's versions, Noguchi's tend, however, to omit difficult passages and to give the general meaning without the use of concrete specific detail.

[52] *Introduction to Japanese Literature* (Tokyo, 1948), pp. 140-147, deal with Noh plays.

[53] P. G. O'Neill, "The No Plays *Koi no Omoni* and *Yuya*," *Monumenta Nipponica*, X (Apr. 1954), 203-226.

[54] P. G. O'Neill, *A Guide to Nō* (Tokyo and Kyoto, 1954).

[55] D. N. Waugh, *"Matzukaze," Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 2nd series, III (1926), 91.

Not so scholarly either in exactness or in commentary and annotation as the translation of *Kazuraki* by Dräger and Erlinghagen,[56] or of *Minase* by Marega,[57] it reads more smoothly. Even more smooth is the translation of *Sotoba Komachi* by Brock in Keene's *Anthology of Japanese Literature*,[58] which unfortunately suffers by comparison with Waley's version. There are a number of lines which are identical, and many others which naturally are quite similar. However, there are one or two passages which seem fresher and visually more stimulating than Waley's. Yet it is regrettable that he chose to retranslate a play already ably put into English by Waley and into French by Péri.

Also included in Keene's *Anthology* is a prose translation of *Utō* by Weatherby and Rogers.[59] Smooth and accurate, the translation is notable for two qualities: the clear and full stage directions with some analysis of the meaning of the action, and its special solution of the translator's constant problem of dealing with elaborate rhetoric without recourse to voluminous footnotes. When it is impossible to reproduce an image in meaningful English of a similar nature, these translators have stated the abstract meaning briefly and clearly, following it immediately by as accurate as possible an expression of the figure itself. Obviously this is a dangerous practice, since it could lead to padding and expansion; however, in this case the method is handled with great restraint and is quite successful.

Hidden away in long-defunct journals are some translations which may be mentioned. In 1882 someone called "Shinchi" published a fairly complete and accurate prose version of *Hachi no Ki* (Dwarf Trees).[60] Ten years later in "Glimpses of the Japanese Lyric Drama" appeared adequate summaries with lengthy quotations from *Sesshōseki*, *Sumida-Gawa*, and *Kantan*. Only in the case of *Nakamitsu* (or *Manjū*) did the writer depend on previously published translations.[61] In 1898 K. Wadagaki made what apparently is still the only translation of *Ikkaku Sennin*, calling it *Monoceros, the Rishi*.[62] Except for the strange title and the use of "Indian" terms for the characters in the play, this translation is surprisingly good. The Committee plans to publish a new translation of this play.

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[56] Walter Dräger and Helmut Erlinghagen, *"Kazuraki," Monumenta Nipponica*, V (1942), 151-179.

[57] Mario Marega, *"Minase," Monumenta Nipponica*, IV (1941), 260-273.

[58] Sam H. Brock, *"Sotoba Komachi,"* in *Anthology of Japanese Literature*, ed. Donald Keene (New York, 1955).

[59] Meredith Weatherby and Bruce Rogers, "Birds of Sorrow," in *Anthology of Japanese Literature*, ed. Donald Keene, pp. 271-285.

[60] Shinchi, "Chivalry of Old Japan," *The Chrysanthemum*, II (Sept. 1882), 400-409.

[61] "Glimpse of the Japanese Drama," *The Chautauquan*, Aug. 1892, pp. 574-579.

[62] K. Wadagaki, "Monoceros, the Rishi," *Hansei Zasshi*, XIII (Jan. 1898), 14-24.

It is obvious that much remains to be done: over 150 Noh plays are still to be translated; more experiments need to be made in the writing of full stage directions, in the preparation of singable texts,[63] in the use of adequate photographs which may be combined with drawings to give a clear picture of the production of the plays.

Much is to be hoped from scholars such as O'Neill and McKinnon in the elucidation of the history and aesthetic theories underlying the Noh play;[64] even the most elaborate discussion available, that of Noël Péri, is quite inadequate. The Noh, a great art with a long tradition, deserves adequate representation and explanation in the Western world.

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[63] See Roy E. Teele, "Komachi Clears Her Name," *Humanities Review,* V (1955), 27-64, and "*Tsurukame,* The Crane and the Tortoise," *The Husk,* Spring, 1955.

[64] Mr. O'Neill's special interest is the history of Noh, which he has studied in Japan. See Richard N. McKinnon, "The Nō and Zeami," *Far Eastern Quarterly,* XI (May 1952); "Zeami on the Art of Training," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies,* XVI (June 1953).

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*Utō*: Noguchi, 451-455; Weatherby and Rogers, 271-285.
*Yama-uba*: Minagawa, *Young East*, II, 85-93; Noguchi, 447-451.
*Yashima*: Renondeau, *BEFEO*, XXIX (1929), 107-153.
*Yōrō*: Renondeau, *BEFEO*, XXVII (1927), 12-43.
*Yoro-boshi*: Renondeau, *BEFEO*, XXVI (1926), 287-321.
*Yo-uchi Soga*: Renondeau, *BEFEO*, XXVI (1926), 322-358.
*Yuki*: Renondeau, *Le Bouddhisme*, 179-182; Suzuki, 93-96.
*Yuya*: O'Neill, 212-226.

# BOOK REVIEWS

CHAUCER AND THE FRENCH TRADITION; A STUDY IN STYLE AND MEANING. By Charles Muscatine. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957. 282 p.

Although it is presented in seven continuous chapters, Professor Muscatine's book falls naturally into two parts and a peroration. The first three chapters (Introduction, "The Courtly Tradition," "The Bourgeois Tradition") constitute a general analysis of the aesthetic problems implied in the notions of "convention," "realism," and "originality" as stylistic modes, together with an attempt to define the specific stylistic conventions predominantly operative behind and through Chaucer's poetry. The next three chapters ("Chaucer's Early Poems," "*Troilus and Criseyde*," "*The Canterbury Tales*") are an analytical reading of Chaucer's poetry in the light of the theoretical and historical conclusions reached in the first part of the book. Chapter VII, "Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century," is a brief eulogy of Chaucer's achievement by contrast with the degenerative directions poetry was to take in the following century.

The title of the book implies narrower limits of scope than its actual accomplishment justifies. While the first part of the book does draw the bulk of its exemplary material from the dominant mediaeval tradition of French poetry, it remains the first virtue of this excellent study that its basis is not in the simple historical relationship between one poet and one body of poetry, but rather in the perennial critical problems of the relationship between traditional modes and individual accomplishment in poetry. Professor Muscatine is eminently not guilty of the besetting sin of much Chaucerian criticism—the reverse anachronism of refusing to allow analytical comparison between Chaucer's poetry and any other poetry or poetic this side of 1400.

"This study takes issue with—or departs from—a number of characteristically post-Victorian assumptions that are usually brought to Chaucer criticism, and it takes up a number of questions which the post-Victorian critics either no longer seem to have answered well or did not ask at all. In these senses, although it depends throughout on the immense scholarly labors of the past seventy-five years, it is an exploratory effort toward a modern criticism of Chaucer.

"Specifically, it seeks to determine Chaucer's 'meaning' as a complex whole; by giving form and style their due attention as essential, inseparable concomitants of meaning, it will try to balance the traditional preoccupations with 'content' alone. It sees realism as a technique and a convention, not as an end in itself, and it sees convention as a potentially powerful tool, not as something to be avoided or rebelled against. Rhetoric, too, it takes to be an instrument and not a vice. Liberated in great measure by post-Victorian scholarship itself, it does not confine its attention to narrowly textual sources in tracing and using the literary history behind Chaucer, but attempts broadly to explore his stylistic heritage" (p. 1).

Professor Muscatine fulfills these introductory promises with admirable consistency throughout his book. It is interesting, however, that his "modern" criticism of Chaucer (which many who still read in the shade of the "post-Victorian critics" will certainly call anachronistic) produces a view of convention in poetic style much closer to mediaeval and Chaucerian theories and attitudes than were the post-Victorian ones which sought to be so "historical."

The book tempts one to what is in a way unfair criticism; it is entering areas so undeveloped in traditional Chaucerian criticism, and so interesting, that it is all too easy to be irritated at it for not opening up everything completely as it

goes. On the whole it is a sign of Professor Muscatine's success in bringing us to basic issues that we so often want him both to broaden and to particularize.

Perhaps a typical difficulty in the book, one reflecting the inherent difficulty of the problems it attempts to confront, is seen in this statement about the style of the Provençal *Flamenca*: "Revolving about each of these overburdened, whispered messages is a world of debate and analysis, delicately but too surely overdrawn to be taken in perfect seriousness" (p. 55). I should think the first problem of style would be *by what verbal agencies* "delicately but too surely overdrawn"? By what ordered controls is the critic's evaluation specified and necessitated by the poem? There is even a possible argument that, in the context of such a discussion, the term "style" might most clearly be used only to refer to the specifiable patterns of such agencies and controls, and not to their contents or effects. Through much of the first part of the book, the precise value of the term "style" is not as clear as the importance of the discussion should require it to be. "Style," "syntax and diction," "structure," "voice" are recurrent terms which partly overlap, sometimes seem synonymous, and sometimes are to be severally distinguished.

Since he leads us to see so clearly that "courtly" poetry is a necessarily stylized poetry because it is the "non-representational" poetry of ideality, we want more of the anatomy of this style. The insistence on the conventionality of mediaeval "realism," on the other hand, is perhaps the more important of the two basic perceptions upon which the book rests—(1) the "real" applicability of "courtly" style, and (2) the creative viability of "realistic" style. It is important primarily because it keeps us, by a *proper* insistence upon the groundwork of text, language, and history, from following a false insistence on them through to a denial of poetry. But, again, the verbal rhetoric of conventional poetic realism has always been relatively unexplored in stylistic theory (and particularly among the academic theorists of the early thirteenth century—Chaucer's *maisters* in the art); therefore, all the more, one wants a scholar who sees the nature of the problem so plainly to give us a good deal more than he does of a practical, analytical rationale of such realism as a style. Professor Muscatine's discussion, however, is copiously documented with well-chosen quotations, so that it may make up by implication for many of its limitations in explication.

The principal virtue of his critiques of Chaucer's poems, in the second part of the book, is precisely what Professor Muscatine's introduction predicts. The poems he treats emerge as cooperative wholes (that is, to the extent that their states of completeness will allow it), rather than as collections of examples of this or that theme or manner or influence. Without producing any radically new readings, he manages to show the best and most "complete" poems (especially the *Book of the Duchess* and *Troilus and Criseyde*) to be more solid, more finely and deeply shaded, more carefully and consciously wrought. And not infrequently this close attention to formal matters results in a sharper definition of "theme," a fuller perception of "meaning." Again, I would have liked to see Professor Muscatine develop still another, slightly different, aspect of the question of form and meaning—Chaucer's own consciousness of it; or, to put it somewhat more accurately, the insistently recurrent theme, in all the poems up through the *Legend of Good Women*, of the justifiable artistic perspective—the proper (decorous) manipulation of conventional or traditional means, generalized ethical purpose, individual experience and insight, and the emotional and imaginative responses of the audience. I think there is a sense in which one of the key "meanings" of each of these poems is that it is a fresh formal experiment in such an adjustment. Perhaps (as Professor Muscatine once implies) much of the attenuation and incompleteness of these poems results from Chaucer's continuing dissatisfaction

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with his provisional resolutions. In any case, the traditional aesthetic which Chaucer shared with his contemporaries and predecessors (including Dante) postulated an ideal resolution of this formal rhetorical problem as the ultimate justification of poetry. In Chaucer's earlier poetry there is a continuing—perhaps an increasingly urgent—concern with definition and analysis of the terms of this problem, culminating in the theoretical discursiveness of the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, which, unfortunately, Professor Muscatine did not choose to examine extensively.

If a critic were to take seriously this primary formal consciousness in Chaucer's poetry, he might feel that Professor Muscatine is a bit more uncomfortable than he needs to be over the disparity between "realistic" and "courtly" elements in the *Book of the Duchess* (taking the form there of the "realistic" comic stupidity of the narrator-dreamer against the "courtly" pathetic rhetoric of the Black Knight). Even agreeing that the poem does not finally quite perfectly balance its meaningful formal elements, one might still argue that the disparity can well be taken as a structural and stylistic reflection of a general thematic (moral) problem—the separate limitations of practical experience on the one hand and the ideal ethical vision on the other, with the consequent necessity for a difficult (in this case, nearly impossible) reconciliation of the two for persuasive knowledge—the evolution of a *rhetorica utens* from a *rhetorica docens*.

In that sense, I quite agree with Professor Muscatine's feeling of a connection between the *Book of the Duchess*, and the *House of Fame* and *Parliament of Fowls*. The two latter are entangled (very differently, to be sure) in the problems of relating knowledge (vision and tradition) to act (practical experience). In the *House of Fame*, the poem splits apart and remains inconclusive because the vision achieves no specific point of application, so that the problem of converting understanding to act cannot come to a head. And it is probably significant also that the "action" to which this poem's "vision" is so dimly directed is to be in general poetry—in particular, love poetry. In the *Parliament of Fowls*, the poem remains thematically (though not stylistically) inconclusive because it is ordered insistently around the possibility of failure of understanding among a hierarchy of styles and points of view, and action is paralyzed. I think that in all three of these cases Professor Muscatine might have seen even greater significance in the formal idiosyncrasies of the poems had he considered his problem of the reconciliation or complex fusion of "courtly" and "realistic" styles as a problem, not only for the understanding of the critic, but also for the rhetoric of the poet. However, at the conclusion of a nice discussion of *Troilus and Criseyde*, he states neatly the gist of my arguments, apparently feeling them to apply more properly to *Troilus* and *The Canterbury Tales*[1]: "His characteristic achievement, of which the *Canterbury Tales* is another and more grandiose example, is the perception of the ways in which traditional forms can be used to apprehend and organize contemporary experience" (p. 165). I would add only that Chaucer's is also a painful perception of the practical aesthetic (and epistemological) problems which arise in the poetic attempt at such uses.

But, if these arguments hold at all, they would finally only justify Professor Muscatine's "modern" insistence on the relevance of form to meaning and convention to invention, by demonstrating its very closeness to Chaucer's own sense of what he was about. I know of no other critical study of Chaucer's poetry which offers so much clearheaded insistence on the radical problems of tradition and imagination in poetry (or, as problems in critical method, "historical scholar-

[1] It is too bad Professor Muscatine has apparently made no use of Ralph Baldwin's *Unity of The Canterbury Tales*; that study approaches many of his conclusions from an interestingly different direction.

ship" and "formal criticism"), and so much sensitive reflection on the directions in which Chaucer sought solutions for those problems in his poetry.

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IL MITO DI FAUST. By Vincenzo Errante. Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1951-52. 3 vols. xvii, 423 p.; xi, 277 p.; 514 p.

These volumes by the late professor of German literature at Milan University contain his introduction to his interpretation of Goethe's *Faust* (Vol. I: *Dal personaggio storico alla Tragedia di Goethe*) and his interpretation of the first part of that work (Vols. II and III: *Commento alla Prima Parte della Tragedia di Goethe*), treating lines 1-2604 and 2605-4612, respectively). At the very least, two more volumes would have been necessary to provide a comparable commentary for the remaining 7,499 lines of the drama which Errante in 1924 (when the first edition of Vol. I appeared) regarded as "la piú alta risposta espressa dall'anima di un poeta, dopo la *commedia* dantesca, al suo [mankind's] interrogare perpetuo sulle proprie sorti nel mondo e nell'al di là" and in 1950 (the year of the preface to Vols. II and III) as "della Poesia europea moderna ... il vertice insuperato."

Inspired by a conviction that the legend of Faust twice becomes a myth of universal human significance—in the dramas of Marlowe and Goethe, as he first sensed from the prologue on the stage of Boito's original *Mefistofele*—Errante traces in his first volume the fortunes of Faust from the first decade of the sixteenth century to the Fausts of Storm and Stress and Goethe's "Urfaust." This volume, with its strong emphasis on intellectual-historical moments, rarely lets one forget that its author was an academic specialist in German literary history, however acute his critical insights. But the succeeding volumes reveal an Errante who has matured as critic and poet—the author of studies of Novalis, Lenau, Dehmel, Rilke, and Catullus; the translator of Aeschylus, Catullus, Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, Novalis, Kleist, Grillparzer, Heine, Lenau, Baudelaire, Guérin, Valéry, Wagner, George, Hofmannsthal, Rilke, and Carossa—and one whose method of exposition effectively reflects his conviction that it is necessary "che la scienza umanistica universitaria—*proprio perché umanistica*—spalanchi porte e finestre alle sue aule sorde e cieche: e si protenda fuori, a parlare finalmente un eloquio che non sia il frigido gergo stereòtipo rivolto da se stessa a se medesima, a tutt'al piú ai pochi iniziati; sibbene un caldo linguaggio animato, diretto a comunicarsi alla intiera comunità culta della nazione" (II, x).

And so, while Errante's first volume is burdened with many footnotes, marred by long literary-historical and other digressions, and often stupefying as a consequence of its ever-felicitous but overfamiliar rhetorical phrasing, the second two are wonderfully readable despite their lengthiness. Reasons for the choice of one of several already suggested interpretations of a given passage are incorporated into the text (name references and a sufficient bibliography permit the reader to know what critics Errante had in mind); references to other literary works, whether earlier or later, are succinct and to the immediate point (they do not serve, as do some in Vol. I, to refresh the university student's memory of certain literary-historical developments that he will probably need to know for examination purposes); and the prose is more matter of fact, though never rhythmically monotonous.

All this is not to say that Vol. I of *Il mito di Faust* suffers by comparison with such subsequent studies as E. M. Butler's *The Fortunes of Faust*, Geneviève Bianquis's *Faust à travers quatre siècles*, or Charles Dédéyan's encyclopaedic *Le*

*Thème de Faust dans la littérature européenne.* Rather is it, I think, more philosophically organized than any of these treatments of the same material, emphasizing as it does only those pre-Goethean treatments of Faust which are historically significant or of some intrinsic literary merit, and reflecting sound critical judgment in its author's refusal to concern himself (except as it were by marginal anticipations) with the history of Faust as a literary and musical figure after the Storm and Stress period. Errante was aware that similarities of theme and identity of subject matter should not blind the historian-critic to the fact that with literary stars of immensely different magnitudes the comparative technique ceases to be fruitful. It is perhaps because of this awareness that he so fully and carefully places the Faust chapbook in its literary, theological, and philosophical contexts (after having sketched briefly the known facts about the historical figure), and neglects to do as well for the next work analyzed, Marlowe's play, which has so much more intrinsic merit.

In Marlowe's *Faustus* he recognizes strong mystery-play elements, although he perhaps exaggerates the extent to which they are converted into "organiche energíe drammatiche" (p. 162), but sees it in the last analysis as a drama of ideas closely related to the rise of the "new science" of Campanella and Bruno, on which he has a longish excursion.

Here, and in connection with an earlier discussion of Calderón's *El mágico prodigioso* and a later one of the state of German drama during the seventeenth century, Errante seems to ignore the importance of Latin school and Jesuit drama, somewhat to the undue credit, perhaps, of *commedia dell'arte* and *comédie italienne*, as far as the seventeenth-century German stage is concerned. Indeed, if Errante shows any literary-historical blind spots, they seem to be connected with theatrical history—hence his echoing of the ill-founded assumption that Hans Sachs represented a literature suffocated as it was about to flower, though he was rather the last important representative of a moribund tradition—and with the seventeenth century, of which he asserts, for instance, that German poetry was "ben riparata dalla tempesta degli eventi entro i pensatoi e le accademie dei gramattici dei rètori dei 'professores poëseos,' o addirittura con essi esule a randagia per le terre d'oltre confine" (p. 221). As the constant allusions to "stirpe" in this volume indicate, however, at the time of its writing Errante was apparently under the influence of both positivistic and mystic Teutonism, so that he thought ill of a period when degenerate poets ignored, except for Brockes (!) and Gryphius, indigenous and cognate (English) models in a futile attempt to continue humanistic traditions really defeated by Luther, the creator of New High German!

In the last third of Vol. I, under the heading "Il Redento," Errante treats the Fausts of Lessing and of Müller and the young Goethe, as illustrating respectively Aufklärung and Storm and Stress. In his excellent analysis of Lessing's fragments and plans he offers the plausible theory that Lessing abandoned the subject of Faust at the very moment his ideas on catharsis had become irreconcilable with the moralistic conception of art in which it was originally taken up—a theory to which it might be countered, however, that the subject seemed destined for comic, not tragic, treatment. In his discussion of Storm and Stress Errante exaggerates, I think, the parallels between that revolt and that of Renaissance German humanists and Reformation Lutherans against foreign spiritual domination—hence such a hardly plausible assertion as that Storm and Stress was accompanied by an epidemic of enthusiasm for magic "quasi del tutto simile a quello che vedemmo coincidere con l'epoca dell'esistenza reale di Faust" (p. 301). His interpretation of Müller's "Faust" successfully uses stylistic analysis (of translated texts, at that) to illustrate the typical Storm and Stress imbalance between feeling and thought. The "Urfaust" is presented in the context of Goethe's pre-

Weimar development—but it is not seen as originating before Strasbourg, as some scholars (it seems to me, willfully) continue to propose (cf. also Errante's note 40, p. 322). The reader may doubt whether there is really in its first scene the spirit of German romanticism "avanti lettera" (p. 334) or that there is quite so sharp a gap between that scene and the Margarete action as Errante implies (p. 342—cf. R. M. Browning, "On the Structure of the *Urfaust*," *PMLA*, LXVIII, 1953, 458-495), but he will surely find Errante's analysis on the whole convincing and illuminating.

Because Errante's commentary must remain a fragment, the concluding pages of his first volume—a sketch of the action of the final *Faust*—assume great importance for establishing his position on those issues which continue to divide interpreters. He sees Faust independent of Mephistopheles when he descends to Persephone to obtain Helena's release; he sees Faust redeemed by work (something less egoistic than "estetismo") and saved by "il misericorde amore di Dio"; and he sees that *Faust* is one great, unified work, although—and I find this contradictory—its "fantasía" is, in the second part, "sciolta da ogni vincolo logico." Since, in his second two volumes, he frequently quotes Borgese and other "unitarian" critics favorably, it may be deduced that, in writing his commentary on *Faust II*, he would have incorporated their best insights into his own study and have brought out, with Borgese, the dream-play aspects of *Faust II* that seem neglected in his perforce brief summary of plot. In any case, his analyses of episodes, scenes, and groups of scenes would surely have been as subtle and illuminating as it is in the two completed volumes of commentary, where he regularly demonstrates great sensitivity to thematic contrasts, structural rhythm, the value of symbols, etc.

Errante's commentary is executed on such a full scale that it can simultaneously be running text and discussion of points ordinarily treated only in footnotes. His expositions of when scenes were written, or how modified between original composition and incorporation in *Faust I*, are not too long, given their context, and are always judicious. He gives the action of *Faust* in full detail, supporting his account with extensive and well-translated quotations. (He does not hesitate to expand in translating if the sense can only be so conveyed: the lines "Uns ist ganz kannibalisch wohl, / Als wie fünfhundert Säuen!" become "Danziam, come cannibali / presso un arrosto umano. / Godiam, siccome grufola / il porco nel pantano." This is better, surely, than the mere half-sense of Raphael's "We feel as hoggishly well, do we, / As five hundred cannibals off on a spree," Morgan's "O, we're as gay as cannibals or as five hundred sows," or Taylor's "as 'twere five hundred hogs, we feel / So cannibalic jolly!")

Interpretative passages I particularly admire are the discussion of "Zueignung" (a first, lyric prologue); the comments on "Vom Himmel durch die Welt zur Hölle" (Errante offers the novel theory that the contradiction between this and the action of *Faust* emphasizes the surprise of Faust's salvation); the three-level reading of the Wagner episode in "Nacht"; the evaluation of the folk dance song of "Vor dem Tor"; the examination of the implications of Faust's exegetic error in the matter of Logos (Faust's skill in dealing with Mephistopheles seems underrated); the emphasizing of dream technique in connection with the end of the first scene "Studierzimmer"; the magnificent, even poetic analysis of "Auerbachs Keller"; the discussion of "Hexenküche" which, although it treats the rejuvenation motif literally, makes the valid point that in *Faust* contemporary allusions do not represent anachronism but a shift to the timeless world of the supernatural—a point again well taken in connection with "Walpurgisnacht"; the careful demonstration, at the opening of Vol. III, that "il dramma di Margherita" is equally the drama of Faust (although I am not sure that it is the drama of love as pri-

marily an experience of youth—this neither fits Goethe's life nor the Helena action of *Faust II*—or that Margarete is closely modeled on Friederike, despite parallels adduced from *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, in view of the arguments H. Meyer has brought in *Goethe: Das Leben im Werk* against the traditional literal view of Goethe's sense of guilt in connection with her).

It would be possible to extend for pages the catalogue of excellently taken points in Errante's commentary, especially in connection with his observations on the aesthetic gains achieved by the reorganization of the sequence of scenes for the final *Faust I* of 1808. One can only admire his courageous refusal to take "enigmistic exegesis" seriously and what occasionally seem to be his completely new insights (that, for instance, "Dom" gains by *not* being—as opposed to the *Fragment* version—necessarily a scene connected with the funeral of a member of Margarete's family). He may call, somewhat arbitrarily, Gretchen's monologues at the spinning wheel and in "Zwinger" songs (by exaggerating the former's folksong features), but for the most part he only sees what is really in the text, though he perhaps overvalues it—as with "Walpurgisnachtstraum," I think. Minor errors of spelling and in references are insignificant in an undertaking so Faustianly grand as this never-to-be-completed commentary, and one can only mourn the death of the scholar-critic who had so ardently hoped to complete it.

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JULIO HERRERA Y REISSIG AND THE SYMBOLISTS. By Bernard Gicovate. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957. 106 p.

The poetry of the Uruguayan Herrera y Reissig (1875-1910) has provoked both increasing critical interest and enduring confusion since the controversy which arose after his death concerning the possible plagiarisms of Leopoldo Lugones. The recent words of a French literary historian are symptomatic of the former: "poète qui monte, sauf erreur. Plus apprécié hier qu'au lendemain de sa mort, plus aujourd'hui qu'hier. Il faudra bien lui donner sa place."[1] For these reasons Bernard Gicovate's excellent book is a doubly valuable one.

Not long ago Guillermo de Torre called for a thorough study of Herrera's literary sources—an obvious request, since the work of most *modernistas* is so heavily dependent on the imaginary museum of nineteenth-century French poetry. Fortunately Gicovate, a *comparatiste* of the Harvard school, has not written such a book. His title makes this point clear. The critic's concern is the elucidation of Herrera's achievement—its nature, its purposes, its development—in the light of the aesthetics of European symbolism. Furthermore, the initial chapters of his study, which deal with the relation of French poetry to *modernismo*, and with its influence on Herrera, clearly attempt to avoid the confusion, so common in source studies, between textual similarities and genuine phenomena of inspiration of one writer by another. For example, Gicovate says concerning Herrera and Mallarmé: "it is an aesthetic influence, the end result of a long development acting in Herrera, rather than the imitation of a procedure. However, a few echoes of Mallarmé's early poetry are noticeable" (p. 31). However suitable the terminology—"aesthetic influence" versus "echoes"—the distinction is a useful one. The echoes in Herrera of Verlaine and Poe, as well as of Mallarmé, are, Gicovate tells us, only incidental. But the borrowing of another poet's themes and vocabulary lays the foundation for two important stages in Herrera's evolution. Rubén Darío's exoticism makes pos-

[1] R. Bazin, *Histoire de la littérature américaine de langue espagnole* (Paris, 1953), p. 284.

sible the change after "Wagnerianas" (1899), and the idyllic pastoral conventions of Albert Samain—an apparently contrary influence—remain distinctive of his writings after "Ciles alucinada" (1903).

Gicovate's comparative chapters, which are not essential to his purpose, are perhaps the least valuable in his book. A brief survey of *modernismo*, and of its relation to French literature, is probably an impossible task. Gicovate's treatment of Darío, for example, is unavoidably sketchy. The *manner* in which Darío admitted so many influences is more significant than the origin of those influences (a problem studied by Erwin K. Mapes, Arturo Marasso, and Pedro Salinas, in books which Gicovate does not mention). As for Herrera's own use of Rubén's innovations, this is clarified implicitly by Gicovate's later analyses. The Nicaraguan's exotic canvases were *expressive*, as Salinas has shown, of his more enduring inner themes. Herrera's endless exaggeration of the same elements, in *Las pascuas del tiempo*, represents only an introduction to a world of autonomous hallucination, of verbal and symbolic construction beyond the personal; a Baudelairian world (rather than Verlainian, like Darío's), in fact, guided by a poetic temperament as rigorous and as ambitious as Mallarmé's.

Gicovate's last four chapters are especially illuminating. An initial study of the poet's imagery establishes a system of coordinates for the analyses which follow. Herrera's very diverse sensorial images suggest a hypothetical, independent universe, where particular things are endowed with the characteristics of other spheres of being. The symbolist preference for synaesthetic images leads to a mythical transcription of nature: "El sol es miel, la brisa pluma y el cielo pana ..." ("Los perros").

Most penetrating is Gicovate's interpretation of the conditions that are necessary, under the symbolist aesthetics, to the creation of a symbol. An image becomes a symbol by virtue of its suggestive power and its acclimatization within the whole of the poem. The symbol, then, as Svend Johansen explains, coincides with an absence. Hence the value of the synaesthetic identification of two foreign sensations as a means toward "an allusion to the existence of a third order" (p. 49). This process leads inevitably to private meanings or to what Gicovate calls the "Symbolist impasse." Herrera y Reissig in his last works attempts above all to emerge from this impasse. In "La muerte del pastor" and especially in the sonnet series *Las clepsidras* (1910), which is based on a kind of eclectic universal mythology, the poet turns from his experiments in a private diction to "community myths." The Uruguayan's achievement appears as an effort to transcend his own aesthetics, to synthesize the contradictory forces in himself. These forces are both verbal and ideological. "Ciles alucinada" is the first step in the projection of the poet's emotions into imaginary characters, but in this work Herrera's vocabulary is still a battleground for the most heterogeneous elements (colloquialisms, extravagant word coinages), just as his view of life oscillates between the vision of guilt and that of innocence. The latter tension is still active in the *Sonetos vascos*, where crime and Christianity coexist. But the broader structures of Herrera's last poems —such as *Las clepsidras*—bring about, in the critic's opinion, a synthesis of these clashing forces: "... he has proceeded at last to a serene inclusion of the diverse elements of nature and to a reconciliation with life's imperfections" (p. 81).

Vistas are opened and problems are suggested by this admirably concise study, which one hopes the author will be able to develop further. The reminiscences in Herrera from Garcilaso and Góngora, which Gicovate indicates briefly, confirm this reviewer's belief in the poet's ultimate return, by virtue of the symoblist influence, to the more *culta* tradition of Spanish poetry. Herrera's preference for the noun epithet ("incendio cadáver," "astrólogo girasol," etc.) echoes, more than Mallarmé and Laforgue, Góngora and Tirso de Molina. Baroque contrasts and

images (Quevedo) appear, not only in the early *Las pascuas del tiempo*, but in a sonnet such as "Las arañas del augurio"—where the fingers of a Darío princess, running over piano keys, are transformed, in an astonishing line, into "... arañas augurales de un mundo sobrehumano."

For a clarification of the confused issue of Herrera y Reissig's poetry, more forceful value judgments would have been necessary. Gicovate's final words, "... Herrera pointed the way for the poets who wrote after the days of the *modernista* movements in the River Plate region" (p. 92), are surely an anti-climactic understatement. The issue is the present and future validity of Herrera's poems as a component of the extraordinary body of literature which modern Hispanic writers, on both sides of the Atlantic, have bequeathed to lovers of poetry everywhere. Is Herrera to remain on a level with a Vallejo, a Huidobro, a Neruda? Gicovate, again, suggests more than he states. Herrera's best images certainly have, rather than a symbolist musical or evocative quality, a searing, blinding intensity—the nervous power, in Valéry's words, of the "stupéfiant." This effect Gicovate attributes to the simultaneous presence of clashing forces in such lines as

> "bajo el ciprés, nos remordió una aguda
> crisis de cosas para siempre extintas,"
> ("Expiación")

or

> "las músicas naufragan en el ancho sosiego."
> ("La procesión")

Such are the best results of the feverish alchemist's art. Yet Gicovate's preference goes to the reconciliation embodied in the larger structures of Herrera's last poem, a reconciliation involving for the most part meaning and intent. Are these poems, however, poetically superior? Or did Herrera lack precisely the ability to organize such structures, or even the gift for the choice of any structure—what Dámaso Alonso has called "la intuición del molde"—as may be shown by his tendency to run over and spill endlessly into chaotic enumeration whenever he is not contained by a unit like the sonnet or the dixain? Gicovate seems to think so when he writes that Herrera was "la victime du discontinu" (Thibaudet's words on Mallarmé), or points out his "self-contradictory desire for totality and... obsession with the momentary" (p. 91), his yearning for serenity and completeness—poetic as well as psychological—which the tortured poet expressed most eloquently in his pastoral sonnet sequences ("¡oh huerto de la dicha sin fiebre!"). These questions remain open to future critics of Herrera y Reissig. Bernard Gicovate, through his very valuable study of the nature and development of the poet's art, has contributed decisively to their elucidation.

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# VARIA

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

The Second Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association will take place at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill September 8-12, 1958. The discussions will chiefly center around the scope and methodology of comparative literature and the problem of European-American literary relations. Fifty of the approximately 150 expected participants and leaders in the field of comparative literature will be from abroad, from eighteen different countries and four continents. For further information write to: Box 775, Chapel Hill, N.C.

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